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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

NORTHERN FISHERIES.

WITH A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

EXPEDIENCY OF ESTABLISHING FISHING STATIONS,

OR

SMALL TOWNS,

IN THE

HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND,

AND THE

HEBRIDE ISLANDS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE LAST REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, TO ENQUIRE INTO THE STATE OF THE BRITISH FISHERIES.

BY JOHN KNOX,

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M DCC LXXXVI.

PRICE THREE SHILLINGS.

PREFACE.

AS the improvement of the Highlands, and the fiſheries upon their extenſive ſhores, is now become an object of Parliamentary attention, the following Plans and Obſervations may prove uſeful to ſuch ſenators as ſhall give them a peruſal.

The gentlemen of the Committee on the Britiſh Fiſheries having cloſed their enquiries for this ſeaſon, I have ſubjoined their laſt *Report*, by which means the public will be furniſhed, at one view, with the moſt material points that remain to be diſcuſſed in Parliament.

The reader will perceive ſome difference reſpecting Bounties, between the plan recommended in the following *Detail*, and that recommended in the *Report*. This ariſes from an idea conceived by ſome members of the Committee, that the appropriating a part of the bounty to the quantity of fiſh caught, will operate as a more effectual ſtimulus to induſtry among the fiſhers.

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This plan, it muſt be acknowledged, hath very conſiderable merit, and might, with ſome ſmall Amendments, be rendered unexceptionable, if it could be carried into practice, on a diſtant and very extenſive coaſt, without the hazard of peculation, colluſion, and frauds.

Some objects of leſs import ſtill await the attention of a future Committee, or of the Senate; which, when brought forward, will complete the moſt judicious Syſtem of Fiſhery Regulations and Arrangements that hath hitherto been formed in theſe kingdoms, and to which every ſenator, who ſhall take the trouble of inveſtigating the ſubject, and its conſequences, will, we hope, give his hearty ſupport.

CONSI-

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

NORTHERN FISHERIES.

SECTION I.

OF the buſineſs which claims the immediate attention of Parliament, that of the northern fiſheries, though among the moſt important, ſeems to be the leaſt underſtood; and it is in a great meaſure owing to this miſconception, that the firſt nurſery for ſeamen in the poſſeſſion of any nation, hath at no time been carried to any conſiderable extent by the ſubjects of theſe kingdoms, while foreigners have for many ages, derived benefit from them, almoſt beyond the powers of belief.

The Britiſh fiſheries; her coaſting, European, and North American trade, raiſe hardy and healthy ſeamen, on whom the defence of our country, the protection of our commerce, and diſtant ſettlements, ſolely depend. The trade to Africa, and the Eaſt Indies, hath alſo been repreſented as a nurſery for ſeamen, but with leſs propriety, as it enervates and deſtroys conſiderable numbers of that valuable claſs of people annually, and requires conſtant ſupplies from thoſe who navigate the temperate climates of Europe and America. The Weſt India trade is alſo detrimental to the health of mariners, though in a much leſs degree than the African and Aſiatic voyages.

Thus, it appears that our fiſheries and home trade anſwer the double purpoſe of ſupplying the waſte of thoſe great branches, the trade to Africa, China, and both the Indies, while it enables us to man the moſt victorious fleets that the world hath ſeen.

It is a pleaſing conſideration, that notwithſtanding the almoſt unequalled extent of our home trade, and the number and magnitude of the royal navy, ſources are ſtill in re-

ſerve by which theſe important objects may be carried to a greater height, and this envied iſland enabled to meet the combined force of its enemies, at leaſt, on equal terms.

The firſt object is home colonization, by which I mean the bringing forward the northern part of the iſland, encreaſing the number of uſeful active people, on thoſe much neglected ſhores, whereby the general commerce would be greatly extended over the whole iſland, and at a ſmall expence, compared to the enormous expenditure on precarious ſettlements abroad. Of this policy, the neighbouring nations, particularly France, Germany, and Ruſſia, are ſetting examples with unremitting vigour. Every thouſand perſons thus brought into the line of action at home, contribute more to the ſtrength of the empire than twenty thouſand people ſettled, and protected, at a conſiderable expence, at the diſtance of ſome thouſand miles from the centre; and if we can only add in the proportion of one third, or fourth, to the voyages carried on at preſent in temperate climates, the navy will be ſupplied with

greater facility both in the commencement and progreſs of war.

But colonization is a work of time, and however vigorouſly we may apply to that object, it is to be feared that the evil day would come upon us, before we could derive any material benefit from it, even ſuppoſing that the Legiſlature ſhould enter upon the laudable work during the preſent Seſſions of Parliament.

The ſecond, and alſo the moſt ſpeedy and effectual meaſure, is the northern fiſheries, which, to revive, extend, and confirm to the native ſubjects, may be conſidered as the grand work of the preſent period, and which may be carried into execution almoſt inſtantaneouſly, to the amazement and diſappointment of thoſe who may have already formed the plan of hoſtile operations.

The indiſpenſible neceſſity of immediate attention to this nurſery, will appear from the following ſtatement of the progreſſive increaſe of men employed in the navy from the revolution in 1688, when England and Holland entered into an alliance of mutual defence, to the cloſe of the laſt war.

The

The war commenced in	1689,	employed	45,000
———	1702,	———	41,000
———	1740,	———	60,000
———	1755,	———	70,000
———	1775,	———	110,000

The late change in the political ſyſtem of France from military to naval exertion, and the powerful acquiſition of the Dutch navy to that of France and Spain, will in all probability require 200,000 men on the part of Great Britain; and when we recollect the difficulties, embarraſſments, delays, diſappointments, and heavy expences in raiſing from 41 to 110,000 men ſince the beginning of the preſent century, it is evident to a demonſtration, that not only the protection of our trade and colonies depends chiefly upon the northern fiſheries, but alſo the defence of Great Britain itſelf; which, were it invaded by the conjunct force of thoſe powers, would receive a ſhock fatal to public credit, and to every department of which that credit is the main ſpring.

The vigorous preparations which France, Spain, and Holland are making in time of profound peace, and the well known diſpoſitions of theſe powers for abridging the

commerce of this country, leaves no room to doubt of ſome great deſign being in embryo, which may come upon us like a thunder bolt, unleſs we avert the ſtorm by having always in readineſs 200,000 ſeamen on whom we can depend, when wanted for immediate ſervice. This is our ſheet anchor, and to which all other modes of defence are only ſecondary aids. The inſular ſituation of Great Britain and Ireland renders them vulnerable on every ſide along a coaſt of 3000 miles, lined for the greateſt part with unprotected towns, ſhipping, dockyards and valuable merchandize. To raiſe fortifications ſufficient for their defence would be the work of half a century, at an expence of many millions; and to garriſon them completely, would require above 50,000 men, ſupported at an expenditure which theſe nations cannot afford.

Fortifications may however be neceſſary in a certain degree, as at the dock yards, and the entry into navigable rivers whoſe ſhores are populous and commercial: the erection of theſe works may be carried on with greater or leſs expedition, as the overplus revenue

ſhall

ſhall admit, becauſe a well appointed fleet *will* anſwer the purpoſe of national protection for ſeveral years to come, before our ſuppoſed enemies ſhall be able to man all their ſhips.

In ſhort, it is impoſſible to defend ſuch an extent of coaſt by any other means than a powerful navy, which will always command reſpect, keep the enemy at a diſtance, divide their force, and perplex their councils. While it is the moſt effectual, it is alſo beyond compariſon the cheapeſt mode of defence, and equally well calculated for commanding the attention of the enemy to their own ſhores. To this have been owing the peace and ſecurity of the centre of the empire while war hath raged in every quarter of the globe. From theſe conſiderations it would ſeem expedient, *in the firſt inſtance*, to provide an annual fund for keeping in home employ, a number of men ſufficient to meet the enemy with that confidence which hath hitherto animated the breaſts of Engliſh ſeamen, and led them to victory in almoſt every encounter, againſt equal numbers. The practicability of raiſing this number of men,

and the comparative inſignificancy of the expence, will be the ſubject of another paper.

SECTION II.

THE number of ſeamen upon the peace eſtabliſhment and in actual ſervice, is — — 14,400
And of marines — 3,600

Men 18,000

	£.
The annual expence for each man at 4l. per month for 13 months, is 52l. and the ſum total for 18,000 men —	936,000

Suppoſing a ſum equal to one fifth of the above expenditure ſhall be appropriated annually to the northern fiſheries, the number of men and boys thus employed, may be eſtimated thus, viz.

The

	£.	Men.
The eaſtern fiſhery between Shetland and Yarmouth * will employ 300 buſſes, carrying from 20 to 120 tons (but the higheſt bounty extending only to 80 tons as at preſent) the average burden 60 tons, at 40s. per ton bounty, and the average number of men in each buſs, 14. —	36,000	4200
The weſtern fiſhery between Shetland and the Solway Firth, including the Firth of Clyde, and Lochfine, will employ 500 buſſes equipped as above.	60,000	7000
	96,000	11,200

* The veſſels fitted out on this ſide of the kingdom would alſo frequent the weſt coaſt occaſionally both in the herring and white fiſheries, and ſtill more ſo when the propoſed canals ſhall be finiſhed.

The

	£.	Men
The eaſtern fiſhery will employ 3000 boats, each boat carrying 5 men and 1 boy, on an annual premium of 15l. per boat - -	45,000	18000
The weſtern fiſhery will employ 4000 boats and wherries as above -	60,000	24000
Expence on 7000 boats, number of men	105,000	42000
Ditto on 800 buſſes — do.	96,000	11200
Total expence and number of men - - -	201,000	53200

But on account of ſome contingent expenditures, we ſhall ſuppoſe the net ſum of 200,000l. will employ 50000 men only, in that caſe each ſeaman engaged in the fiſheries, will coſt the public 4l. per annum, being only a 13th part of the expence upon the ſeamen maintained on the peace eſtabliſhment.

To illuſtrate this diſproportion by another mode, let us ſuppoſe that war ſhall commence this day twenty years,

The

	£.
The expence of the 18,000 ſeamen and marines will have coſt the public from the preſent time -	18,720,000
And the ſame number of fiſhers during the ſame period, only	1,440,000
Difference in the expence upon equal numbers of men, in 20 years - -	17,280,000

And if we extend the calculation to the full number of fiſhers, the comparative expence will ſtand thus, viz.

On 18,000 ſeamen and marines	18,720,000
And on 50,000 fiſhers -	4,000,000
	14,720,000

Thus 18,000 ſeamen and marines kept on the peace eſtabliſhment during 20 years, will have coſt the public 14,720,000l. more than 50,000 ſeamen employed during the ſame period, on fiſheries!

But however diſproportioned is the expence of keeping in readineſs theſe two claſſes of men, we cannot diſpenſe with leſs than 18,000 ſeamen in actual ſervice; and if to theſe we add the propoſed number of fiſhers, the

the general amount will be 68,000 men, ready to act as occaſion may require, excluſively of all other ſources, at the annual expence of 1,136,000l.; being, when thus blended, (viz. the men at 4l. with thoſe at 52l.) nearly 17l. per man for the whole number, ſo that it remains with the public to decide upon this matter, whether to keep in readineſs only 18,000 men at 52l. each, or 68,000 at 17l. each.

As it cannot be ſuppoſed that any perſon who hath the ſmalleſt regard for the ſafety of his country, its commerce and diſtant ſettlements, will heſitate a moment on the preference due to the latter propoſition, the mode of raiſing the additional 200,000l. for the peace as well as war eſtabliſhment is next to be conſidered. On one hand, we perceive Government ſtraining every nerve to raiſe the fund for reducing the national debt; on the other hand, the people are already burdened beyond example with accumulating taxes; yet, if this inconſiderable ſum of 200,000l. ſhall be found eſſentially, if not indiſpenſibly neceſſary for the further extenſion of our naval armaments, the Legiſlature muſt either

weaken

weaken the hands of Government, or make another call upon the people, or rather upon the luxuries of the wealthy. If amidſt the numerous politicians of the preſent day, I might venture to give an opinion upon this alternative, it would be to leave Government in the full poſſeſſion of the preſent revenue, and, at the ſame time, give every true patriot an opportunity of contributing 3s. or upwards towards the beſt of all national purpoſes, the keeping war at a diſtance, and the enemy from our gates; which contribution might be laid upon dogs*, gentlemen's carriages, or any

* Propoſal for a tax on dogs.—Let every perſon who ſhall keep one or more dogs be obliged to take out a licence, ſpecifying the number of dogs he ſhall ſo keep.

Let every perſon taking out ſuch licence be obliged to pay for the ſaid licence at the rate of three ſhillings for every dog, which the licence ſhall authoriſe him to keep.

Let a new licence be taken out at the end of the year from the date of the former licence.

Let the tax be payable for every dog that ſhall be more than eight days old.

Let it be declared that every dog ſhall have a collar of metal or leather, on which ſhall be marked in legible characters, the name of its owner, and the place of his or her abode.

All farmers who rent leſs than 25l. per annum to be exempted.

other

other article of luxury. Thus, the ſeaſonable diſburſement of a mere trifle, and that well applied, may be the means of averting greater requiſitions, not only upon dogs, but on carriages, horſes, ſervants, dreſs, &c. which will be inevitable, unleſs all the conſtituent parts of that mighty bulwark, the Britiſh navy, ſhall be kept in conſtant readineſs to combat the greateſt naval force which may be brought againſt it.

But, admitting that the wealthy part of the nation ſhall take this further expence upon themſelves, it may be doubted by ſome perſons whether there be an abſolute certainty of thus raiſing and employing 50,000 men in the northern diviſion of the iſland. To this, it may be anſwered, that, ſhould the given number of men fall ſhort, the expenditure would be proportionably leſs, and 4l. for every man deficient, would remain in the Treaſury. If, for inſtance, only 25,000 men ſhould, upon an average of years, be employed in theſe fiſheries, the expence would be 100,000l. and the ſuplus would conſtitute a fund for internal improvements.

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I am very far, however, from having any doubts on that head; and it is the peculiar happineſs of theſe kingdoms that there are no grounds for any. By a long and attentive application to the hiſtory of the northern fiſheries, from the earlieſt accounts to the preſent time; by perſonal enquiries amongſt the fiſhers themſelves, reſpecting the number of veſſels, boats, and men which have been, are, and might be employed, on the different ſhores of Scotland, as well as in the great nothern ocean contiguous to that kingdom, I am inclined to believe that the ſeamen thus employed, might, inſtead of 50 be increaſed to 100,000, providing the bounty amounted to 6l. per man annually. So extenſive are thoſe ſeas, and ſo inexhauſtible are the fiſh which they contain, that the number of ſeamen may be increaſed to any amount, or reduced to afew thouſands as at preſent. The whole depends upon the aid given by Government towards encouraging theſe fiſheries, as well as the mode of applying that aid. It is therefore at the option of the public, whether to raiſe and employ in this nurſery, 25, 50, or 100,000 men: probably

bably the medium number will appear the moſt eligible on which to try the experiment. I ſhall only obſerve further in this place, that had France been poſſeſſed of ſuch a channel whereby to equip her navy, that of Great Britain, together with its commerce, would probably have been annihilated long ago.

SECTION III.

HAVING ſtated the number of men which may be raiſed by the northern fiſheries, the expence to the public, and the moſt effectual manner of applying that expence, an anſwer may be expected to ſome objections advanced by certain uninformed, ſpeculative writers, reſpecting the propoſed mode of beſtowing the public aid.

Previouſly to the diſcuſſion of this ſubject, I ſhall give a retroſpective ſketch of the practice by which the fiſheries were carried on in former times under the ſanction or by the authority of the national councils.

It ſeems evident, from tradition and hiſtory, that the French and Spaniards frequented

quented the weſtern coaſts of Scotland in very early times, where they traded with the natives for fiſh. By this it may be underſtood, that the Scots were the fiſhers, and that foreigners were the carriers.

It is probable, that this fiſhery was carried on by little open wherries or boats, ſuch as the Highlanders generally uſe at the preſent day. The Scottiſh Legiſlature, in later times, laboured to enforce a more effectual and extenſive method of carrying on the fiſheries, by obliging not only the royal boroughs, but alſo the nobility, dignified clergy, and principal gentry, to fit out ſhips, buſſes, and pink boats, with nets and all other neceſſaries for fiſhing, throughout the whole kingdom. Though the Hebrides, and the oppoſite ſhores, far removed from the ſeat of government, were, it may be ſuppoſed, ſcarcely within the reach of theſe laws, in rude ages, yet we find certain regulations in the reign of James III. reſpecting the Hebrides fiſhery.

During the reigns of James and Charles I. the Duke of Richmond, Lord Southampton, Sir William Monſon, and other perſons of

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diſtinction, warmly recommended a vigorous proſecution of the fiſheries; and in 1633, ſeveral of theſe perſons embarked in the deſign of eſtabliſhing a Hebride or north weſt fiſhery, which Charles honoured with his patronage, and encouraged by his bounty. He alſo ordered *Lent* to be more ſtrictly obſerved; prohibited the importation of fiſh taken by foreigners; and agreed to purchaſe from the company his naval ſtores, and the fiſh for his fleets. Thus the ſcheme of eſtabliſhing an extenſive fiſhery began to aſſume a favourable aſpect; but all the hopes of the adventurers were fruſtrated by the breaking out of the civil wars, and the very tragical death of their generous benefactor. It alſo appeared, upon a ſubſequent enquiry, that the company had ſuſtained many loſſes and wrongs by their ſervants, throughout the whole buſineſs.

In 1654, a number of perſons of conſiderable property in London, ſeemed earneſtly to ſet about the herring fiſhery; and for their encouragement, the Engliſh commonwealth granted them an exemption from the duties on ſalt, and naval ſtores, to be uſed in the

ſaid fiſhery. Collections were likewiſe made at London, and other parts, toward the erecting of wharfs, docks, and ſtore-houſes; and for the purchaſing of ground for the making and tanning of their nets. The attempt being fruſtrated through Cromwell's uſurpation, nothing was done except the deſtroying the old fortification at Stronaway in the iſland of Lewis, by that uſurper, and his building another to bridle the inhabitants, who, notwithſtanding this precaution, cut off his garriſon to a man.

In 1661, Charles II. the Duke of York, Lord Clarendon, and other gentlemen of rank and fortune, reſumed the buſineſs of the northern fiſheries with greater vigour than any of their predeceſſors. For this purpoſe the moſt ſalutary laws were enacted by the Parliaments of England and Scotland, in virtue of which, all materials uſed in, or depending upon, the fiſheries, were exempted from all duties, exciſes, or impoſts whatever. In England, the company were authoriſed to ſet up a lottery, and to have a voluntary collection in all pariſh churches; houſes of entertainment, as taverns, inns, ale-houſes, were to

take one or more barrels of herrings, at the ſtated price of 30s. per barrel; and alſo, 2s. 6d. per barrel was to be paid to the ſtock of this company on all imported fiſh taken by foreigners.

Some Dutch families were alſo invited, or permitted, to ſettle at Stronaway: the herrings cured by the Royal Engliſh Company gave general ſatisfaction, and brought a high price. Every circumſtance attending this new eſtabliſhment ſeemed to be the reſult of a judicious and comprehenſive plan, when, unfortunately, the neceſſities of the king obliged him to withdraw his ſubſcription or bounty, which gave ſuch umbrage to the parties concerned, that they ſoon after diſſolved,

In 1677, a new royal company was eſtabliſhed in England, at the head of which was the duke of York, the earl of Derby, &c. Beſides all the privileges which former companies had enjoyed, the king granted this new company, a perpetuity, with a power to purchaſe lands; and alſo 20l. to be paid them annually, out of the cuſtoms of the port of London, *for every dogger or buſs*, they ſhould build and ſend out for ſeven

years to come. A ſtock of 10,980l. was immediately advanced, and afterward 1600l. more. This ſmall capital was ſoon exhauſted in purchaſing and fitting out buſſes, with other incidental expences. The company made, however, a ſucceſsful beginning; and one of their buſſes or doggers actually took and brought home 32,000 cod fiſh: other veſſels had alſo a favourable fiſhery.

Such promiſing beginnings might have excited freſh ſubſcriptions, when an unforeſeen event ruined the whole deſign. Moſt of the buſſes had been built in Holland, and manned with Dutchmen; on which pretence, the French, who were then at war with Holland, ſeized ſix out of ſeven veſſels, with their cargoes and fiſhing tackle; and the company being now in debt, ſold, in 1680, the remaining ſtores and materials. A number of gentlemen and merchants raiſed a new ſubſcription of 60,000l. under the privileges and immunities of the former charter. This attempt alſo came to nothing, owing to the death of the king, and the troubles of the ſubſequent reign.

Soon after the Revolution, the buſineſs was again reſumed, and upon a more extenſive ſcale; the propoſed capital being 300,000l. of which 100,000l. was to have been raiſed by the ſurviving patentees, or their ſucceſſors, and 200,000l by new ſubſcribers. Copies of the letters patent, the conſtitution of the Company, and terms of ſubſcription, were lodged at ſundry places in London and Weſtminſter, for the peruſal of the public, while the ſubſcription was filling. It is probable, that king William's partiality to the Dutch fiſhers, the ſucceeding war, or both of theſe circumſtances, fruſtrated this new attempt, of which we have no further account in the annals of that reign.

The Scottiſh parliament had alſo, during the three laſt reigns, paſſed ſundry acts for erecting companies, and promoting the fiſheries; but the inteſtine commotions of that country, and the great exertions which were made for the Darien eſtabliſhment, enfeebled all other attempts, whether by collective bodies of men, or by individuals, within that kingdom.

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In 1749, at the close of a long and expensive war, his late majesty having, upon the opening of the parliament, warmly recommended the improvement of the northern fisheries, * the House of Commons appointed a committee to enquire into the state of the herring and white fisheries, and to consider of the most probable means of extending the same.

All ranks of men were elevated with an idea of the boundless riches that would flow into the kingdom from this source, besides the advantages to the royal navy, which would derive vigour proportioned to the liberal encouragement given to this great nursery of seamen. The city of London and other corporations petitioned the House of Commons for an extensive fishery; and thus, the king, the parliament, and the people,

* Hitherto the British Company fisheries had been chiefly confined to the Hebrides, or Western seas. it was now proposed to attempt the Shetland fishery, the great station of the Dutch, and other foreigners. These islands lie 100 miles due north from Scotland, and about the same distance from Norway. They were subject to the crown of Scotland, and now form a part of the British empire.

being unanimous in ſentiment, a ſubſcription of 500,000l. was immediately filled in the city, and 120,000 was actually lodged by a body of men who were incorporated for 21 years, by the name of, *The Society of the Free Britiſh Fiſhery*. Every encouragement was held out by government, both to the ſociety and to individuals, who might embark in this national buſineſs. A gratuity of 3 per cent. *per annum*, was to be paid to the ſubſcribers upon every 100l. actually employed in the fiſhery; and an annual bounty of 30s. per ton, during 14 years from the date of the charter, to the owners of all decked veſſels or buſſes, of 20 to 80 tons burden, which ſhould be built after the commencement of the act, for the uſe of, and fitted out and employed in the ſaid fiſheries, whether by the ſociety or any other perſons. At the ſame time, numerous pamphlets and news-paper eſſays came forth, all pretending to elucidate the ſubject, and to convince the public with what facility the herring fiſheries might be transferred from Dutch to Britiſh hands.

This

This proved, however, a more arduous taſk than had been foreſeen by ſuperficial ſpeculators. The Dutch were frugal in their expenditures and living, perfect maſters of the arts of fiſhing and curing, which they had carried to the greateſt height and perfection. They were till the riſe of the Swedes, in full poſſeſſion of the European markets, a trifling rivalſhip from Scotland and Yarmouth excepted; and their fiſh, whether deſerving or otherwiſe, had the reputation of ſuperior qualities to all others taken in our ſeas.

With ſuch advantages, the Dutch not only maintained their ground againſt this formidable company, but had alſo the pleaſure of ſeeing the capital gradually ſinking, notwithſtanding the efforts of government from time to time in their favour, particularly in 1757, when the bounty was extended from 30 to 50s per ton. Their affairs becoming deſperate ſoon after this liberal exertion of parliament, they ſold their veſſels and materials, and finally relinquiſhed a buſineſs which had reduced their capital to little more than 7 per cent.

The

The fall of this ſhort-lived-ſociety was chiefly owing to the want of markets, both at home and abroad; and, as if fate had decreed againſt the permanent eſtabliſhment of a Britiſh fiſhery, the herrings at this time took a new courſe, which, though ſufficient quantities ſtill fell in upon our northern ſhores, raiſed an unexpected rival to the Britiſh, as well as the Dutch fiſhers or merchants.

The coaſts of Norway, Sweden, Holſtein, Germany, Britain, and Ireland, are, or have been, the principal ſeats of the herring fiſheries on this ſide the Atlantic. Sometimes, however, the herrings, after having frequented certain ſhores for many ſeaſons, and even ages, have capriciouſly abandoned thoſe ſhores, ſeemingly never to return. Antiently, the coaſt of Sweden abounded ſo plentifully in herrings, that veſſels reſorted thither from various parts of Europe, to load with that article. Leaving the Swediſh coaſt, the herrings fell to the ſouthward, upon Holſtein and the German ſhore, where they became a valuable prey to the Hans-towns, who thereby acquired a degree of opulence, power, and ſplendour, till then unknown in the north.

About

About the beginning of the ſixteenth century, the herrings alſo forſook the coaſts of Germany and Holſtein, as appears by the writings of Camden, Raleigh, Monſon, and other Britiſh as well as foreign hiſtorians; and it was during the ſubſequent period, while Britain might have been enriched by an excluſive fiſhery, and the command of markets, that the Dutch directed their attention to the Scottiſh ſhores, with ſuch aſſiduity and perſeverance, that it is conjectured they have thereby realized three hundred millions ſterling, while the infatuated natives were mere dabblers both in taking and curing.

Theſe trifling captures enabled the Scots, however, to carry on a petty traffic with France, Hamburgh, Sweden, and the towns on the Baltic, where their herrings found a ready market; and, it is probable, that the ſociety of the Free Britiſh Fiſhery had a view to the Swediſh and Baltic trade when they firſt contemplated the buſineſs: but, as before obſerved, inſtead of a market, they had ſcarcely commenced their operations, when

to

to their great aſtoniſhment, they found a formidable rival.

About the year 1752, the herrings returned to the Swediſh coaſt after an abſence of three or four centuries, of which bounty, that nation ſoon availed itſelf, and at preſent the exports of pickled herrings amount nearly to 200,000 barrels, beſides the ſupply of the kingdom, which is very conſiderable.

The circumſtances of this fiſhery gave the Swedes a decided advantage over that of Shetland and the Hebrides, and enabled thoſe people to ſupply Europe at 7 or 8s. per barrel, while the Britiſh ſociety could not take leſs than a guinea for the ſame quantity.

The herrings and cod-fiſh are driven in ſhoals by the whales, upon that part of the Swediſh coaſt which lies contiguous to the trading city of Gottenburg. As the whales dare not venture in between the iſlands and the rocks upon the main land, they remain ſome weeks watching for the return of the ſhoals, on the back of a ſand-bank which lies parallel to the ſhore, and extends 300 miles in length. In the mean time, the ſharks, porpuſſes, and ſmaller fiſh of prey, purſue and drive

drivethe cod and herrings along ſhore to inlets and creeks, where they crowd in ſuch numbers that they are taken up in baſkets or pails; and, it frequently happens, that upon the ebb of the tide, thoſe which are furtheſt within the crevices, are left in heaps upon the beach, for thoſe who chooſe to take them up. It is chiefly by means of this eaſy capture, with the cheapneſs of caſks and labour, that the Swedes have defeated the late attempts of this country to eſtabliſh fiſheries, by means of ſocieties; and, if ever this great national buſineſs ſhall be carried to any conſiderable extent, it will be ſolely owing to the encouragement given, not to chartered companies, but to individual adventurers; and to the ability of thoſe adventurers to perſevere in that buſineſs againſt all the accidents, diſcouragements, and misfortunes which attend it, both in the capture, and the ſale of the fiſh.

So inconſiderable was the fiſhery of the ſociety, that the higheſt amount of bounties in one year, viz. 1757, was only 8667l. and the greateſt quantity of white herrings exported, viz. in 1758, only 10,942 barrels.

SEC-

SECTION IV.

HAVING brought down the hiſtory of the ſociety or chartered fiſheries to the time when the laſt Britiſh company abandoned their enterprize, and ſold their veſſels, ſtores, and materials, it is now propoſed to ſtate ſome particulars relative to the preſent weſtern fiſhery carried on by individuals upon a bounty, with the cauſes of its decline, and the certain means of eſtabliſhing an extenſive, permanent fiſhery in the ſeas which environ the northern part of the united kingdom.

When the ſociety diſſolved, all the fiſhing chambers eſtabliſhed in the ports of the eaſtern coaſt, and which were branches of that ſociety, alſo broke up; and from that time forward, the buſs fiſhery hath been almoſt totally neglected on the eaſt ſide of Great Britain, excepting at Yarmouth, where the fiſhers, ſtimulated by the certain annual returns

turns of the herrings, and the facility of taking them, employ about 100 veſſels upon their own coaſt, but, *from choice, without the bounty*, and conſequently without the reſtraints and extra expence which the bounty laws require.

As the herrings taken at Yarmouth are chiefly dried or reddened, the Britiſh white herring fiſhery ſeemed now loſt beyond recovery to the inhabitants of theſe kingdoms, while Dutch, Hamburghers, French, Flemings, Danes, Pruſſians, Dantzickers, were again reſtored to the full poſſeſſion of our Shetland and eaſt country buſs fiſhery, which they have engroſſed to the preſent time, two or three veſſels excepted, which have occaſionally made their appearance in that employ between Shetland and the main land of Scotland.

Thus were the inhabitants of Great Britain, after a ſucceſſion of liberal, and vigorous efforts, nearly beat out of their own fiſheries, when a ſpirit of enterprize broke forth in the weſt of Scotland, which bade defiance to the inclemencies of the winter, or the dangers of the turbulent Atlantic; and had not their laudable exertions been checked by a train

train of impediments injudiciouſly impoſed by the Legiſlature, the Board of Cuſtoms at Edinburgh, and the ſubordinate officers in that department, there is every reaſon to believe, that 500 buſſes would have been afloat at this preſent time, from the Clyde, the weſt Highlands, and the Hebride iſles, on the fiſhery of theſe ſhores.

Of theſe impediments I have ſelected the following:

1. *By the ſtatute of* 1750, *the buſſes fitted out for the Shetland fiſhery were to rendezvous at Braſſa Sound, before the* 22*d of June (New Stile) and might ſhoot or wet their nets on the* 24*th of the ſame month, agreeably to the practice of the Dutch and all foreigners; but the veſſels fitted out from the Clyde for the weſtern or Hebride fiſhery, were not to proceed from the place of rendezvous before the* 12*th of September, by which reſtriction they were deprived of the Summer fiſhery, when the fineſt and beſt flavoured herrings abound on theſe ſhores, which always bring a high price at the European markets.*—This ſtrange defect is now rectified by a ſtatute of laſt ſeſſions, which permits the buſſes to clear out any time after the 1ſt of June. An act of the Iriſh Parliament

ment, which paſſed at the ſame time, allows the veſſels of that kingdom to clear out on or before the 25th of April, though I can ſee no reaſon for that early day, as the herrings proper for markets do not make their appearance before the middle of June, more uſually the beginning of July.

2. *Veſſels clearing out at Greenock, Port-Glaſgow, and other towns on the Clyde, at the beforementioned late ſeaſon, were, nevertheleſs, obliged to rendezvous at the port of Campbeltown; a reſtriction without an object, though attended with inconveniencies, expence, and frequently great delays in the outward-bound voyage, by which the ſeaſon was waſted and ſometimes loſt, the adventurers injured, and the Weſt India ſhips unneceſſarily detained from proſecuting their voyages.*—The ſtatute of laſt ſeſſions empowers veſſels to proceed immediately from the place where they are fitted out, to the fiſhing grounds.

3. *The ſtatutes enacted, that all and every perſon and perſons employed in the fiſheries may fiſh in any part of the* Britiſh ſeas, *and ſhall have and exerciſe the free uſe of all ports and harbours, ſhores, and forelands,* in Great Britain or the

iſlands belonging to the crown of Great Britain. But the licenſes granted by order of the Commiſſioners of the Cuſtoms, to the buſſes on clearing out, bore, that ſuch a veſſel *was to proceed to the north weſt Highlands*; and the oath adminiſtered on the ſufferance inwards, was, *that the herrings were caught on the coaſts of Scotland.* Thoſe who could not take this oath had the mortification to find themſelves deprived of the parliamentary bounty. This direct reſiſtance to the ſpirit and expreſs words of the law happened at a period when the herrings had ſeemingly forſaken their uſual courſe through the Hebride iſlands, in their migration to the north of Ireland and the Iriſh channel, where the devoted Scottiſh fiſhers were by theſe cuſtom-houſe mandates prevented from following them. The whole coaſt was filled with indignation againſt theſe ſelf-made legiſlators, after having in vain pleaded upon the obvious words of the ſtatutes of their country. At length, in 1783, the Convention of the Royal Boroughs took the matter into conſideration, and, in a ſpirited memorial addreſſed to the Lords of the Treaſury, brought the

Commiſſioners to a right conception of the ſtatutes, which, in a circular letter to the fiſhers of Scotland, they pretend to have miſunderſtood. As the herrings had been remarkably plentiful on the coaſts of Ireland and the Iſle of Man, while the Scots were prohibited from taking them, the loſs, poſitive and negative, ſuſtained by theſe people, hath been eſtimated at a very conſiderable amount. At the ſame time, the inhabitants of the weſtern parts were deprived of their uſual ſubſiſtence, and in a ſeaſon of extreme ſcarcity.

4. *Veſſels on the bounty were not to be under* 20, *nor above* 80 *tons burden.*—The fiſhers petitioned for permiſſion to employ veſſels of larger ſize in that branch, when ſuch veſſels happened to be unengaged in trade or freights. Their requeſt was granted by the foreſaid ſtatute, and veſſels of any ſize above 20 tons may now be employed in the fiſheries; but the higheſt bounty is to remain as before, upon the 80 tons only.

5. *Veſſels were to remain at ſea from the* 12*th day of September till the* 11*th day of January, unleſs they ſhould ſooner have completed their loading*

of fiſh; and, by a ſubſequent ſtatute, they were to be at the place or places of rendezvous at any time between the 1ſt day of Auguſt, and the 1ſt day of October in each year; and to continue fiſhing for the ſpace of three months from the day of their reſpective departure from the ſaid places of rendezvous, unleſs they ſhould have ſooner completed their loading of fiſh.—By the ſtatute of laſt ſeſſions, veſſels are permitted to purchaſe herrings from the Highland boats, *if, at the expiration of three months they ſhall not have fiſhed their full cargo.* This law is, however, ſtill very defective, and extremely prejudicial to the buſs fiſhery as well as that of the boats. The clauſe which obliges the buſſes to remain at ſea three months, ſubjects the owners to burdenſome expenditures in proviſions, liquors, and wages, while the merchants or purchaſers are equal, if not greater ſufferers, by the delays occaſioned through this tedious method of procuring cargoes. And it is alſo certain, that, though the buſſes are thus detained upon a ſedentary fiſhery by their long boats, (the veſſels being at anchor in ſome loch or bay) they ſeldom return home with more than half a loading; whereas,

whereas, a permiſſion to purchaſe herrings immediately on their arrival at the favoured loch or channel, as well as to fiſh, would enable them to return earlier, and with better cargoes, to the mutual benefit of all parties concerned, the merchant, the fiſher, and the poor natives, whoſe boat fiſhery was ruined by this law. *See View of the Britiſh Empire, page* 214--241.

6. The regulations and reſtrictions reſpecting foreign and home made ſalt are ſo ill adapted to an extenſive, townleſs coaſt, that a compliance with the revenue ſtatutes, in the preſent ſtate of the Highlands, is impracticable. The frequent journies and voyages, with the numerous cuſtom-houſe fees, on account of the ſalt buſineſs, have alſo been found too expenſive for a branch which requires the cloſeſt œconomy in every department. This ſubject is now under the conſideration of the committee upon the Britiſh fiſheries, by whom the heads of a more unexceptionable bill will be brought into the Houſe of Commons during the preſent ſeſſions.

7. All herrings cured for home ſale are ſubject to a duty of 1s. per barrel, if uſed in Scotland, and 3s. 4d. if uſed in England; which

duty having a manifeſt tendency to obſtruct the fiſheries, this ſubject is alſo before the committee.

8. The cuſtom-houſe fees upon the fiſheries in Scotland have become ſo burdenſome as to abſorb a conſiderable part of the bounty, eſpecially on ſmall veſſels: particular ſtatements thereof have been laid before the committee, and redreſs is expected.

9. The unforeſeen prohibition of American produce, in 1776, raiſed the price of pitch, tar, hemp, and ſtaves, to a height unknown in any former period, viz.

	l. *s.* *d.*	—	*l.* *s.* *d.*
Tar per barrel from	0 8 0	to	2 2 0
Beſt hemp per cwt.	1 14 0	—	2 6 0
Caſks for herrings -	0 2 6	—	0 5 6
Foreign ſalt per buſhel, alſo roſe from	0 1 6	---	0 3 0

While ſeamens wages, proviſions, and every material for fiſhing or ſhip-building, roſe, during a 7 years war, in a proportionable degree.

10. But the moſt diſcouraging circumſtance relates to the bounty. It hath been obſerved that, in 1750, government, to encourage the herring

herring fiſheries, whether carried on by companies or individuals, granted a bounty of 30s. per ton on the buſſes who ſhould engage therein; and that, in 1757, it was found expedient to extend that bounty to 50s.: That upon the ſtrength of ſuch encouragement, and relying on the punctual payment thereof, the enterprizing ſpirit of the weſt country people attempted a Hebride fiſhery, after all efforts of the Britiſh Society, and the fiſhing chambers in the out-ports, on the eaſt coaſt, had totally failed.

The number of buſſes increaſed with aſtoniſhing rapidity; the nets, and all the apparatus of the fiſheries, were every year improved; the men became more expert in navigating thoſe intricate ſeas, and in taking and curing the herrings.

The demands from Ireland, the weſt Indies, and for home conſumption, were conſiderable. A fiſhery thus carried on by a perſevering people, ſtimulated by quick ſales, and ſupported, apparently, by liberal bounties, aſſumed for a time, every appearance of national and individual benefit. But theſe flattering appearances were of ſhort dura-

tion: the incitements held out by government proved fallacious to all thoſe who had directed their attention and capital to that buſineſs.

The bounty granted by parliament was tolerably well paid till the year 1766; and the adventurers, many of whoſe circumſtances admitted of no delay, had till then, either obtained payment in a few months, or got their bounty certificates diſcounted by bankers at 5 to 7½ per cent. But, on the return of the fleet in January 1766, the owners were thunder-ſtruck, on finding that they could neither receive payment of the bounties, nor prevail on any banking company to diſcount them at any price, while their brethren who proſecuted that buſineſs from England were paid at ſight *. The Scottiſh fiſhers were officially informed, at Edinburgh, that the fund appropriated for paying the bounties claimed in that part of the united kingdom, was already

* The Engliſh bounty was paid from the general revenue of the kingdom: the Scottiſh bounty was iſſued from one branch only of the revenue, collected within Scotland; which, falling ſhort of the demands made upon it, left the poor fiſhers without remedy.

anticipated

anticipated for ſome years, and no money could be paid till the prior claims were diſcharged.

The fiſhers, or adventurers, had, by their induſtry, perſeverance, and the aſſiſtance of friends, increaſed the number of buſſes between 1759 and 1766, from 3 to 261, which was more than ſix times the number employed by the Britiſh Society at any one time. The aggregate burden amounted to 12,476 tons *; the number of apprentices and men whom they had drawn into their ſervice from idleneſs or indigence, and who were now become expert ſeamen, was 2881, the quantity of white herrings exported, 27,033 barrels, beſides the home ſale, which is always conſiderable when fiſh are plenty.

From this deduction and ſtatement the reader may eaſily conceive the bad policy of thus overturning a buſineſs of ſuch conſequence to the navy, to the ſugar iſlands, and

* The average burden was about 50 tons; and the average number of men 11 to each veſſel. At preſent the buſſes are generally built on a larger conſtruction, and carry 14 men and boys upon an average.

to thouſands of perſons who then depended upon that branch at home. The ſhock occaſioned by the diſappointment was not only felt ſeverely by perſons immediately concerned in the fiſhery, many of whom had ſtretched their credit to the utmoſt limits; but alſo by their neighbours, friends, and kinſmen; by merchants, coopers, blackſmiths, and other perſons who had aſſiſted them in the various operations and diſburſements of the buſineſs. The unexpected ſtroke fell particularly heavy upon thoſe claſſes of men who build and navigate our ſhips; who fight our battles, protect our commerce, and defend our iſland. From the ſame cauſe, alſo, many perſons, whoſe induſtry would otherwiſe have been loſt to the public, now ſaw themſelves in danger of loſing that bare ſubſiſtence which their labour had recently procured; the old and the young, perſons of both ſexes, and at either verge of life, who, though unable, or unqualified for other labour, found employment in dreſſing hemp, ſpinning twine, knitting and making nets, aſſiſting in repacking the herrings, jobbing, &c. In theſe, and ſuch like employments,

ments, 800l. per annum hath been paid in the ſmall port of Campbeltown, and its neighbourhood, chiefly to boys and girls, who otherwiſe muſt have been a burden on their indigent parents.

Such were the conſequences to various deſcriptions of people, from inattention, or ill-judged œconomy, in withholding the encouragement which theſe induſtrious and uſeful members of the community had a right to expect.—But the miſchief did not end here. The nature of a fiſhery requires a long preparation in a variety of expenſive articles, as ſhipping, boats, nets, caſks, and ſalt. No fewer than 258 buſſes had in ſeven years been raiſed on the Firth of Clyde, through an exertion ſcarcely to be exceeded by any body of people in thoſe ſtations of life, and under the ſame ſcanty circumſtances. Theſe veſſels being, in 1765, engaged in a promiſing fiſhery, and the bounty, till then, having been paid nearly at the regular ſeaſons, a new fleet was conſequently on the ſtocks. Timber, pitch, tar, ſails, cordage, ſtaves, hoops, anchors, hemp, netting, and ſalt, were preparing, commiſſioned, or on ſhip-board.

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The coopers had made, or were employed almoſt day and night in making, from 60 to 100,000 barrels: all departments were buſily engaged in their reſpective branches.

It would be difficult to enumerate all the channels of expenditure into which the adventurers, and all perſons depending on that buſineſs, had farther embarked for extending the fiſhery: neither can we form a preciſe eſtimate of the aggregate value of veſſels on the ſtocks; of 261, with their nets and boats, already afloat; of the new materials on hand, and thoſe engaged for; alſo many ſmall houſes built of ſtone, lime and ſlate, upon ſpeculation. But, though we cannot ſpeak with certainty on this head, there are ſufficient grounds whereon to form a probable conjecture that the property, which then depended on the payment of the bounty, amounted to 300,000l.

Here, therefore, was a ſum that far exceeded the general opinion of mankind, of which one part was poſitively abſorbed, and the other part in a train of being expended

on

on a property whereon the proprietors had ſufficient reaſon to depend, till the ſtoppage of the bounty; when the whole property ſuddenly fell in value, became a dead ſtock, and could neither be ſold, nor mortgaged on any reaſonable conditions.

Univerſal dejection, complaints, and murmurs pervaded the whole weſtern coaſts of the kingdom: a general ſuſpicion, every man of his neighbour, friend, or brother, ſucceeded to mutual confidence, and reciprocal good offices. The payment of the bounty, even at any diſtant period, became doubtful. In the mean time, numbers of thoſe men who had unfortunately embarked in expenſive undertakings upon the faith of Parliament, unable any longer to pacify their creditors, found themſelves reduced to the ſad alternative of public bankruptcy, a jail, or of flying to Ireland or America.

The more affluent or fortunate number, who had been able to diſcharge their engagements, ſeeing themſelves ſtill encumbered with the veſſels and materials, were obliged to ſtruggle with the fiſhery againſt all impediments,

diments, or ſuffer the buſſes to rot in the harbours. The intreaties of the idle, the indigent, the widow, and the fatherleſs, who depended on this buſineſs for daily ſupport, contributed alſo to quicken the reſolves of the owners, who, during the four ſucceeding years, fitted out the following number of buſſes, on the ſuppoſed Scottiſh bounty, beſides a number of veſſels who cleared out at Whitehaven on the Engliſh bounty which was regularly paid: but the extra expence in the voyages to and from Whitehaven reduced this bounty very conſiderably, viz.

In	1767	on the Scots bounty	263
	1768	- -	202
	1769	- -	89
	1770	- -	19

The patience and abilities of moſt of the adventurers being now completely exhauſted, and the old bounties for a number of years ſtill unpaid, the ſcene of diſtreſs which operated amongſt all orders of perſons exceeded that of any former period.

Every man was eager to transfer his property upon any terms, to avoid the horrors of a jail; many veſſels were attached and ſold at half

half their value; and happy was he who could aſſign over his bounty certificates at a diſcount ſo low as 30 per cent. Many of the adventurers thus undone, found it neceſſary to contemplate new objects by which themſelves and their families might be ſupported; others left the country; while the merchant of property directed his capital to other channels. In this manner, the Britiſh fiſhery, begun in 1750, under the vigorous ſupport of government, was, at the expiration of 10 years, and again, at the expiration of 20 years, almoſt annihilated, with the apparent loſs of ſome hundred thouſand pounds to the ſubjects of theſe kingdoms, while foreigners were gaining half a million annually by the fiſheries of the Scottiſh ſeas, where the natives, collectively and individually, were baffled in every attempt.

During this melancholy ſtate of the buſineſs, certain perſons thought of an expedient, which ſoon after took effect, and again revived the hopeleſs dejected mind. Experience had convinced the fiſhers that a ſmall bounty, well paid, was preferable, in its operation, to a nominal large bounty, withheld for

for a ſeries of years, and at length producing only 70 per cent. They accordingly made a propoſal to accept 30s. per ton inſtead of 50; which being injudiciouſly agreed to by government*, the 50s. bounty was declared to ceaſe, and, in lieu thereof, a bounty of 30s. was to commence in 1771, for a term of 7 years, and to be punctually paid from the general revenue of Scotland, in the ſame manner as the Engliſh bounties were paid from the general revenue of England.

The fiſhers, perceiving that the bounty was to be paid out of productive funds, ſeemed to forget their former misfortunes. They reſumed the buſineſs with redoubled vigour; inſomuch, that the number of buſſes, which in 1770, had dwindled to 19, had increaſed, in 1776, to 294, carrying 14,193 tons, 3,365 men, and bringing home in the firſt trip, 51,863 barrels of herrings. The fiſhery was now carried on in the harveſt as well as

* Though the fiſhers, thus driven to deſperation, firſt made this propoſal, it was not the intereſt of the public to accept of it. A reduction of 20s. per ton was far too much; it crippled the fiſheries, as experience hath proved, and as the adventurers ſeverely feel.

in

in winter. The money received from the merchant for fiſh, and from the exchequer in bounties, enlivened the whole weſtern coaſt; circulated through every bay, lake, and channel; extended even to the cabins of the exterior parts of the Highlands *, and reached the moſt diſtant iſlands; when, as if fate had decreed againſt a Britiſh fiſhery, a combination of unfavourable circumſtances, already enumerated, co-operating with the ſcantineſs of the bounty, once more involved theſe devoted men in a train of difficulties, and the buſineſs again declined, notwithſtanding every poſſible exertion of the merchants, traders, and fiſhers, to keep it from ſinking. The number of buſſes fitted out from 1776 to 1783 incluſive, were,

In	1776	294
	1777	240
	1778	220
	1779	206

* Not by means of fiſh ſold to the buſſes, which was prohibited, but in wages carried home by young men after the fiſhery was over, in each year. A trifle was alſo earned by the Highland women and children in gutting the herrings.

1780	-	-	181
1781	-	-	136
1782	-	-	147
1783	-	-	153

And though we are now at peace with all mankind; though the bounty is regularly paid, the number of buſſes in 1784 and 5 is greatly reduced.

SECTION V.

SUCH a ſeries of unforeſeen obſtructions to the ſucceſs of the Hebride fiſhery, happening at the infancy of that buſineſs, it is not to be wondered if at the quantity of fiſh caught hath not fully anſwered the expectations of the parties concerned. In the midſt of diſappointments, perplexities, and doubts, it muſt however afford theſe enterprizing men ſome conſolation to find that their caſe is taken up warmly by Government; that ſome impediments have already been removed; that others are now under conſideration; and that every circumſtance, thoſe already enumerated as well as others

of

of inferior import which have not been mentioned, relative to the fiſheries, will be fully inveſtigated, with a view to a more perfect ſyſtem of fiſhery regulations, whereby that great ſource of national ſtrength will be better enabled to hold out againſt occaſional or unavoidable accidents, whether from war or otherwiſe. But, to place the fiſhery beyond the poſſibility of a failure hereafter, to give it efficacy, vigour, and permanency, through ſucceeding ages, ſomething more ſeems requiſite than the mere removal of certain impediments hitherto overlooked or diſregarded. We are to conſider it relatively with the fiſheries carried on by other nations, and to enable the Britiſh merchant or fiſher to go to the European and Weſt India markets upon equal terms, or nearly ſo, with Dutch, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, French, and our brethren in Ireland. If we remain deficient in this reſpect, all other expedients, though they may facilitate a contracted provincial fiſhery, will only operate as ſecondary cauſes, in the more enlarged ſcale which the manning of the navy ſeems to require.

The eſtabliſhment of an extenſive, efficient, permanent fiſhery, requires a liberal, efficient aid from the public, applied by that mode which experience hath proved to be the moſt efficacious, the moſt ſimple, and the leaſt ſubject to frauds or abuſes.

We have given the outlines of the ſucceſſive attempts to eſtabliſh a Britiſh fiſhery for theſe laſt 150 years, with the apparent cauſes of their failure; whereby it is evident, that, excluſively of civil commotions, all attempts to carry on a beneficial fiſhery by ſocieties or companies of perſons unacquainted with the buſineſs muſt unavoidably fail: that the ſame bounty, which, in the hands of the Britiſh fiſhing ſociety, proved ineffectual, operated moſt ſucceſsfully, when in the hands of individual adventurers, merchants, ſuperannuated ſea-captains, reſpectable coopers, ſhip carpenters, and practical fiſhers; inſomuch, that the increaſe of decked veſſels, houſes, population and trade, where the fiſhery was proſecuted, far exceeded the moſt ſanguine hopes of the Legiſlature; and had that

bounty

bounty been continued and regularly paid, had no unneceſſary reſtraints been laid upon the fiſhery, the number of veſſels, houſes, and people, would have at leaſt been double to what they are at preſent. This mode of beſtowing the public aid, is therefore, the only ſure ground-work whereon to build our expectations of extenſive fiſheries; and, though ſome ſpeculative writers have lately endeavoured to depreciate if not to annihilate the buſs fiſhery, on pretence of the want of ſucceſs, without ſtating fairly and candidly the cauſes thereof, it will be difficult if not impoſſible to propoſe a more unexceptionable plan. They have indeed attempted to amuſe, or rather deceive the public, by a variety of ſchemes, ſome of which have been formerly attempted, but failed in the experiment; others are utterly impracticable; and the whole may be pronounced the chimerical effuſions of prejudiced minds, or of perſons whoſe knowledge of theſe ſubjects is ſo limited and ſuperficial, that every merchant, ſeaman, and practical fiſher, by whom that buſineſs is carried on, ridicules theſe theories as idle

fancies, or viſionary dreams, ſcarcely worthy of their notice; much leſs, ſay the fiſhers, ought ſuch men to have any weight with Government. The plans which theſe ſpeculators propoſe to introduce would be productive of ſuch endleſs perjuries and frauds, both towards Government and the purchaſers of the fiſh, that the public would be robbed, and the Britiſh fiſh would be brought into diſrepute at foreign markets. This was the caſe about the time of the union, and ſome years after, in both kingdoms: a large bounty was given per barrel upon herrings exported; the ſame herrings were frequently re-landed and entered a ſecond time upon the bounty for exportation. But this was not the only deception: barrels were ſold abroad at a high price, which when unpacked, were found to contain ſtones and rubbiſh in the centre, and herrings at each end. The merchants were enraged, and for ſome years after the frauds had been diſcovered, it was in vain to attempt the ſale of Britiſh herrings in many towns of the continent. This circumſtance

ſeems

ſeems to have eſcaped the notice of thoſe who propoſe a high premium on exportation, in preference to the tonnage bounty.

We are next entertained with a plan for eſtabliſhing a boat fiſhery at little expence to the public. Much ſtreſs hath been laid upon this ſcheme, as being the moſt effectual, the moſt rational, and the moſt humane deſign that can be conceived. It is this: To give boats and nets to all thoſe who chooſe to aſk for them. I ſhall juſt obſerve on this head, that ſoon after the laſt rebellion, the truſtees for the forfeited eſtates, among other efforts to improve the Highlands and employ the people, gave boats, nets, &c. to the natives upon the coaſt, which were ſoon embezzled, and the good intentions of the truſtees came to nothing.

One writer, more noted for the multiplicity of his projects than the ſolidity of them, propoſes to eſtabliſh a great fiſhery by means of premiums, of which I think he ſpecifies 15 or 20 ſets, each ſet containing 6, 8, or 10 claſſes of boats or buſſes. No other writer ſeems to diſpute the originality of this

ſyſtem of premiums, nor would it require above 500 or 1000 officers, ſuperintendants, &c. to conduct it.

It hath alſo been propoſed that Government ſhould purchaſe all the herrings for ſale, at ſuch a price as would be an equivalent for bounties, which in that caſe ſhould ceaſe.

Admitting this plan to be ſimilar to thoſe already mentioned, I ſhall now mention the only propoſal that hath any claim to attention, viz. To give the bounty, not upon the tonnage of the veſſel, but upon the fiſh caught. This plan ſeems at firſt ſight to have ſome weight, and ſeveral gentlemen, who have taken an active part in the buſineſs of the fiſheries, were almoſt diſpoſed to adopt it in preference to the tonnage bounty. It is indeed eligible in a certain degree, and may ſerve as a ſtimulus for the ſupply of the London market with turbot or other freſh fiſh, by which that fiſhery may be ſecured to Britiſh ſubjects, and many thouſand pounds kept at home, which otherwiſe would, as heretofore, be drained out of the

kingdom.

kingdom. But, though this plan may be expedient in certain caſes, near home, it cannot be reduced to practice in a general view, by any means that could be deviſed, ſo as to extend and perpetuate the northern fiſheries, or to raiſe a great body of experienced ſeamen. Perjuries, connivances, frauds, miſapplication of the public money, and the loſs of foreign markets from the bad condition of the fiſh, would be the unavoidable conſequences of truſting this buſineſs to the integrity of revenue officers, or perſons of any other deſcription or name around that diſtant and very extenſive coaſt; beſides the great additional expence of theſe officers and other checks, which it would be found neceſſary to ſtation in different parts. But ſuppoſing theſe evils to be ideal, and that all men, the merchant, the fiſher, and the officer, were faithful in their reſpective ſtations, and proof againſt every temptation, the Hebride fiſhery would ſpeedily dwindle to a petty boat fiſhery during the ſummer and the autumn, in the lakes and bays upon the coaſt. The proprietors of decked veſſels have unanimouſly declared

that,

that, if the tonnage bounty ſhall be withdrawn, or the public aid applied by any new mode, they muſt unavoidably relinquiſh the buſineſs. Thoſe who are in the mercantile line will, as many have already done, employ their capital in that trade; others will remove with their families, their veſſels, and long acquired experience, to the fiſhing in the North of Ireland, where they will be received by the gentlemen of that country with open arms. The expences attending the fiſhing buſineſs are more conſiderable than is generally imagined, eſpecially in Great Britain, where ſhip-building, materials, cordage, netting, proviſions, and wages are almoſt double the amount of the ſame articles in Norway, Sweden, and the Baltic. It would ſcarcely be ſuppoſed that the firſt coſt of a herring buſs of 60 tons, being the medium ſize now in uſe, amounted to 623l. and that the fitting out for the fiſhery in ſalt, caſks, 15,000 ſquare yards of netting, proviſions, ſtores, wages, &c. for three months, amounted to 322l. in all 945l. beſides inſurance, wear and tear, &c. yet, notwithſtanding this heavy expence, a third

part

part of which muſt be repeated every ſucceeding trip, the veſſels ſometimes return, after inceſſant toils through the winter, without herrings: ſometimes the ſame veſſels return twice ſucceſſively in the ſame manner, and I have an account from one of the owners, of a veſſel having come home three times empty, or, as they call it, *clean*. If the bounty is granted upon the quantity of fiſh caught, the adventurer will be reimburſed his expence, or a great part of it, in a two-fold manner, while he who fits out at the ſame expence, and toils for three months with the ſame aſſiduity, but comes home empty, will be doomed to a double misfortune. An adventurer in a lottery purchaſes a ticket for 15 or 20l. This ſum is ſo inconſiderable that he cannot be materially affected by his want of ſucceſs; but the caſe is quite different with the fiſher, who, in one veſſel only, muſt launch out into an expence of 945l. upon a buſineſs at all times precarious, and particularly ſo of late years; a buſineſs, which, in that country, depends on propitious winds, and favourable weather, while the fiſheries

of

of other ſtates are more certain, carried on with greater facility, and at leſs expence.

Though the bounty is inconſiderable when compared with the original expence, in building the veſſels, and the neceſſary annual diſburſements in repairs, wages, proviſions, &c. it contributes to keep the buſineſs alive: it enables the unſucceſsful fiſher to quiet the clamours of his men, and to engage them for another trip or ſeaſon, upon the hope of better fortune. Thus the bounty, though trifling, is powerful in its operation amongſt men of humble views, and whoſe only wiſhes are, to maintain their families by means of labour, more ſlaviſh and hazardous than thoſe who have not ſeen it can poſſibly conceive.

It is from theſe conſiderations that none of the perſons who are engaged in the fiſheries ever expreſſed a deſire to have the preſent method of carrying on that branch altered in the eſſential parts: on the contrary, all their petitions and memorials tranſmitted to their repreſentatives, expreſs, in the ſtrongeſt terms, the neceſſity of improving it, by the removal of ſundry impediments,

and

and continuing ſuch aid in tonnage bounties as would enable them to proſecute the fiſheries with benefit to their families and their country.

Knowing theſe to be the views and wiſhes of the whole body of practical fiſhers, and the various deſcriptions of people depending on that branch; having been pathetically ſolicited both perſonally and by memorials, or letters, to explain and enforce their meaning; and being fully convinced from long obſervation, that no method can be deviſed, ſo ſimple in its operation, ſo free of exceptions, and ſo likely to anſwer every purpoſe of the navy, of commerce, of colonization in the Highlands, and the relief of a very valuable body of people; I have been endeavouring to counteract and explode all ſchemes propoſed by ignorant or prejudiced perſons, which, if adopted, wholly or in part, by the legiſlature, will, as before obſerved, transfer theſe fiſheries to other nations; and thus a moſt valuable branch will be loſt, or nearly ſo, to the very nation whoſe induſtry, habits, and local ſituation, qualify them for

for extending it to a height unknown in any former period.

Theſe people only require a reaſonable aid, upon rational principles: they ridicule all the reaſonings of uninformed ſpeculative writers, as ill adapted to the nature of their laws, the uncertainty of the fiſh, the incredible fatigues and hazards in cruiſing from place to place amidſt ſtorms, rapid tides, jarring currents, lee ſhores, ſunk rocks, and far projecting head-lands, on every ſide, which to avoid, requires not only good veſſels, but able ſeamen.

Beſides, the bounty ſyſtem hath from long uſuage become familiar to theſe men: They are now expert ſeamen, and experienced fiſhers upon that plan, and any other method will be conſidered as a uſeleſs innovation, even ſuppoſing it poſſible to introduce another method equally good upon the whole. This being the caſe, where is the policy of harraſſing them with novelties which they do not like, which they do not underſtand, which would confuſe their ideas, break the chain of intercourſe between the merchant, the adventurer, and the

the ſubordinate claſſes whoſe daily ſubſiſtence depends ſolely thereon?

Still leſs can the propoſed innovation be defended, when it is evident to many diſintereſted perſons, who have taken the trouble of inveſtigating this buſineſs, that any other plan of carrying on the fiſhery in thoſe ſeas, would fail in the experiment, and diſappoint government, at a period when ſuch diſappointment might be attended with ſerious conſequences to the Britiſh Empire.

The people of Mancheſter, Birmingham, and other parts of England, have, by their ingenuity and long habits, carried their various branches of manufacture to a degree of perfection which ſcarcely admits of farther improvement. Every department in every branch is thoroughly underſtood, and thus the buſineſs is conducted with a facility which cannot be exceeded. Now, were government to frame a ſet of laws obliging theſe ingenious, expert workmen, to lay aſide their old tools, or machines, to adopt new ones, contrived and recommended by revenue officers, and to begin upon an entire new plan of workmanſhip, the conſe-

quences would be univerſal diſcontent, murmurs, and emigration, with the loſs of thoſe branches to their country. The caſe is exactly ſimilar with regard to the Hebride herring fiſhery, and the effects will be the ſame, if government either withdraw their aid, or adopt any new mode in the beſtowing of it.

On the contrary, if the bounty be continued, and ſomewhat enlarged; if it be alſo adapted to veſſels equipped after the Dutch manner for the Shetland fiſhery, and extended to ſuch boats or wherries as ſhall practiſe the fiſheries through the whole year, or the greateſt part of it, there will, in a very ſhort time, be ſuch an appearance on the coaſts of Scotland, and its Iſles, as hath at no period been ſeen, and which may tend to keep that expenſive, deſtructive monſter, *war*, at a diſtance; or, if unavoidable, to prevent thoſe diſtreſſes and embarraſſments which we conſtantly experience, from the want of carpenters and coopers as well as ſailors.

The

The dock yards, ſince the recovery of the ſhip building branch from the Americans *, have

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* "Previouſly to the American war, the ſhipping of this country employed in the foreign trade of Great Britain, amounted to more than half the Britiſh. We ſhall find ſome advantage in running up ſuccinctly to the original cauſe of theſe memorable effects. The year 1638 is the epoch of the arrival of the firſt New-England built ſhip in the Thames; as we may know from the books of the privy council. Amidſt the diſtractions of the ſubſequent civil wars, the New-Englanders became the carriers of the Weſt India product to England; as appears by the newspapers of thoſe times, which are preſerved in the Muſeum. The act of navigation confirmed their right to do ſo, by declaring American built ſhips to be completely Engliſh. Sir Joſiah Child, ſoon after that declaration, warned the nation of the proſpective danger of allowing colonies to build ſhips for their mother country; adding, "that this "kingdom being an iſland, it is our intereſt, as well for our "preſervation, as our profit, not only to have many ſea-"men, but to have them, as much as may be, within "call, in a time of danger." Dr. D'Avenant remonmonſtrated in 1698: "If," ſaid he, "we ſhould go to cul-"tivate among the American plantations the art of navi-"gation, and teach them to have a naval force, they may "ſet up for themſelves and make the greateſt part of our "Weſt-India trade precarious: beſides many other evils "in encouraging them to do ſo, it would carry from hence "a great number of artificers, which in caſe of a war "would be wanting in England." Of that prophecy we have lived, alas! to ſee the fulfilment. But, writers wrote then,

have been fuller in Great Britain than at any former period, during peace. Num-

then, as writers write now, without much effect on public councils.

" During the wars of Queen Anne, the Parliament encouraged the coloniſts to execute thoſe very nautical projects, which thoſe two able ſtateſmen had ſhewn to be abſurdly dangerous. The ſhipwrights of the river came up to Whitehall, in 1725, with a complaint, that their buſineſs declined, and their workmen emigrated, becauſe the plantations furniſhed England with ſhips. Their petition was referred to the lawyers: But, the lawyers anſwered, they might as well complain of ſhip-building at Briſtol; for the American built ſhips were Engliſh. The anſwer of the lawyers was ſent to the board of trade for their advice: And they adviſed. " To lay a duty of five ſhillings " a ton on all American built veſſels, which ſhould be " employed in the *foreign* trade of Britain." The miniſters did nothing in the end. And the ſhipwrights remained quiet, though they found their complaints to be unavailing becauſe faction did not mingle in their grievances. Thoſe who look below the ſurface of public affairs, as they run down the current of time, will not be ſurprized, when they are told: That neither the lawyers, the board of trade, the miniſters, nor the carpenters, knew the true ground of the grievance; which conſiſted in this: The plantation built ſhips were admitted into the ports of Britain with all the exemptions of Britiſh; but, the Britiſh built-ſhips, when they arrived in the colonies, were liable to tonnage duties and to other taxes, from which their own veſſels were altogether exempted. And thus the colony

bers of young men in Scotland, who, from the want of employment at the plow, muſt have embarked for America, are at preſent fully engaged in theſe yards, and of theſe the proportion to experienced carpenters is as three to one. Encourage the

carpenters enjoyed a double monopoly againſt the Britiſh ſhipwrights. The colony carpenters entered into free competition with the Britiſh ſhipwrights in all the dominions of the crown, and even beyond them; while the Britiſh ſhipwrights could enter into no competition with the colony carpenters, in their own ports. And we have ſeen the melancholy effects, which had flowed from the fountain of theſe cauſes, before the epoch of the civil war."

The expence of building merchantmen in Great Britain is, upon a medium, 7l. per ton, for which the workmen complete the hull with joiners work, carved work, painting and glazing. The ſhipbuilders in New England contract to build the hull of ſhips, including joiners work, at 3l. ſterling per ton; but it is ſaid that the American ſhips, upon their firſt arrival in Britain, uſed to require expenſive additional joiner's works, &c. on the hull; and that American ſhips laſt only ſeven years, whereas Britiſh built ſhips laſt 21, and are much ſafer to navigate in ſtormy weather. The expence in building the hull of herring buſſes in Scotland, excluſively of joiner's work, is from 5l. to 5l. 10s. The timber is chiefly from Wales.

buſs fiſhery and ſtill more hands will be engaged. Every lad thus employed may be conſidered as adding ſomething to the Britiſh navy; and, ſhould the buſineſs of ſhip-building become general and permanent in Scotland, as it is in England, navies may be raiſed almoſt inſtantaneouſly, to the aſtoniſhment of mankind, and the terror of combined enemies.

Next in importance to the nurſery of ſeamen and ſhip-carpenters is that of coopers, which is greatly promoted by the herring fiſhery. To wait the return of mercantile fleets from America, Africa, and both the Indies, from whom to collect the three deſcriptions of men for enabling us to fit out ſhips of war againſt half the naval force of Europe actually on the ſeas, is a moſt dangerous expedient, the evil effects of which are well known to thoſe miniſters who had the direction of public affairs during the late preſſing exigencies. To depend on foreign alliances amongſt lukewarm friends, if not ſecret enemies, is equally hazardous. The beſt alliances are

thoſe

thoſe which we ought to form upon our own ſhores, in every bay, port, and creek, along a coaſt of 3000 miles! on which we might depend at all times, and under the moſt preſſing exigencies, with an inconſiderable expence to Government, which the nation would chearfully raiſe.

Many young men in Scotland are annually forced from their country, merely from the want of employment. They are an incumbrance to their parents, and a dead weight upon the diſtricts where they reſide. Let theſe men be employed in fiſheries and navigation in all their branches: ſuppreſs ſmuggling; fill every port with honeſt occupations; and a new generation of maritime people will ſoon line the whole northern coaſt of the united kingdom, beſides contributing eſſentially to the ſupplies of the kingdom.

The people in Scotland are ſtrongly diſpoſed to induſtry, partly from neceſſity, and partly from a native pride which diſdains the idea of depending upon others for ſupport. Every man is emulous of becoming the maſter

buſs fiſhery and ſtill more hands will be engaged. Every lad thus employed may be conſidered as adding ſomething to the Britiſh navy; and, ſhould the buſineſs of ſhip-building become general and permanent in Scotland, as it is in England, navies may be raiſed almoſt inſtantaneouſly, to the aſtoniſhment of mankind, and the terror of combined enemies.

Next in importance to the nurſery of ſeamen and ſhip-carpenters is that of coopers, which is greatly promoted by the herring fiſhery. To wait the return of mercantile fleets from America, Africa, and both the Indies, from whom to collect the three deſcriptions of men for enabling us to fit out ſhips of war againſt half the naval force of Europe actually on the ſeas, is a moſt dangerous expedient, the evil effects of which are well known to thoſe miniſters who had the direction of public affairs during the late preſſing exigencies. To depend on foreign alliances amongſt lukewarm friends, if not ſecret enemies, is equally hazardous. The beſt alliances are

thoſe

thoſe which we ought to form upon our own ſhores, in every bay, port, and creek, along a coaſt of 3000 miles! on which we might depend at all times, and under the moſt preſſing exigencies, with an inconſiderable expence to Government, which the nation would chearfully raiſe.

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of a family, of appearing reſpectable in his neighbourhood, and of giving his children a good education: theſe, and other virtues, it would be wiſe in Government to improve for the public ſafety and welfare.

Such, it may be ſuppoſed, will be the beneficial conſequences to theſe kingdoms from one ſimple act of the legiſlature—permitting the herring fiſhery to be carried on as heretofore, agreeably to the unanimous and earneſt ſolicitations of men, whoſe practical experience in that branch gives them a claim to the attention of parliament preferably to thoſe who pretend to dictate on matters which they do not underſtand.

Though theſe arguments may have the deſired effect with intelligent and candid minds, it may be neceſſary to conſider the ſubject relatively with that carried on of late upon the north coaſt of Ireland, which, we hope, will put the matter beyond a doubt, even with prejudice itſelf.

The Iriſh Parliament had often failed in their attempts to eſtabliſh a herring fiſhery in that kingdom. At length, an accidental circum-

circumſtance, ſimilar to that which began and extended their great linen ſtaple, gave riſe to a fiſhery which now exceeds thoſe of Yarmouth, Scotland, and even the Dutch.

Some time after the peace of 1763, certain emigrants from the weſt of Scotland, happening to wander towards the coaſt of Donegal, and perceiving the benefits which might be derived from an annual ſhoal of herrings, that crowded into the lochs or openings of that coaſt, communicated the particulars to their countrymen upon the Firth of Clyde. In a ſhort ſpace, theſe enterpriſing men ſent over coopers with caſks and other materials for fiſhing, curing, and inſtructing the natives, whereby they expected to realize fortunes upon an unexplored and almoſt unknown coaſt: but their attempts, as might have been foreſeen, had a contrary effect.

The Iriſh parliament, whoſe ſole attention is directed to the extenſion of manufactures, commerce, and fiſheries, ſaw the importance of this branch, which had been ſhamefully neglected by the natives till chance threw theſe miſerable emigrants upon their ſhores. The liberality, judicious laws, and unre-

mitting perſeverance of that Legiſlature, have improved the lucky accident, to a degree which the moſt ſanguine amongſt them neither foreſaw nor expected.

After every neceſſary enquiry into the nature of that buſineſs, and the moſt effectual means of promoting it, they determined upon a tonnage bounty, which at firſt was 20s. to all veſſels of 20 to 100 tons burden, beſides a debenture or drawback upon herrings exported. Perceiving the good effects of the public aid, in the number of veſſels employed, and the quantity of herrings brought to market, the Parliament, during the laſt ſeſſions, took the matter again into conſideration, and appointed a committee of enquiry, whoſe report might furniſh the Houſe with the then ſtate of the fiſhery, and alſo aſſiſt them in framing a new bill for the further extenſion of that very beneficial branch.

The moſt eſſential improvement in this bill, relates to the tonnage bounty, which is raiſed from 20 to 30s. the conſequence of which is an extraordinary increaſe of veſſels, which Colonel Cuningham lately declared in Parliament amounted to 500 ſail; adding, that, inſtead

inſtead of importing 30 or 40,000 barrels of Swediſh herrings, annually, the Iriſh merchants exported laſt year 35,000 barrels of herrings caught on their own coaſts *.

Another member of the Iriſh Parliament repreſents the effects of bounties thus: — "Such had been the policy of Parliament "for 50 years paſt, during which time they "had granted, for the purpoſes before-mentioned, ſums which would be equal to the "national debt; and the conſequences had "been, that their lands, within that period, "had trebled their value; that their linen "manufacture was no longer confined to a "ſingle province; that their fiſheries were "become a great branch of trade; and that "agriculture, with her attendants, population and plenty, had ſpread herſelf "indiſcriminately through every part of the "kingdom:—theſe were the effects of the "well-timed liberality of former Parliaments. Had they liſtened, on the con-

* A ſubſequent account of this year's fiſhery ſtates, that 500 buſſes, carrying 20,000 tons, had got full cargoes; that 2000 boats, carrying 10,000 men, had been ſucceſsfully employed; and that the herrings exported amounted to 150,000 barrels!

"trary,

" trary, to the narrow dictates of timid par-
" ſimony, the country would have conti-
" nued in the ſame deplorable ſtate that it
" was in the beginning of that period: but,
" happily for them, their views were en-
" larged."—

The expediency of a tonnage bounty being thus eſtabliſhed, in preference to all other modes of aſſiſting the fiſheries, the following comparative view of the Scottiſh and Iriſh north-weſt fiſheries may be uſeful, while a ſimilar bill is under the conſideration of the Britiſh Parliament.

There are ſome fiſhes, as the herring, cod-fiſh, haddock, whiting, mackerel, tunny, and pilchard, that may be called fiſh of paſſage, and bear a ſtrong analogy to birds of paſſage, both from their ſocial diſpoſition, and the immenſity of their numbers. Other fiſh live in our vicinity, and reſide on our coaſts all the year round, or keep in the depths of the ocean, and are but ſeldom ſeen: but theſe, at ſtated ſeaſons, viſit the more ſouthern ſhores with regular certainty, generally returning the ſame week in the ſucceeding year, and often the ſame day.

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The herrings are found in the greateſt abundance, in the higheſt northern latitudes within the arctic circle. In thoſe inacceſſible ſeas, that are covered with ice during a great part of the year, the herring find a quiet and ſure retreat from all their numerous enemies: there neither man, nor their ſtill more deſtructive enemy, the ſun-fiſh, or the cachalot, the moſt voracious of the whale kind, dares to purſue them.

The great colony of herrings ſets out from the icy ſea about the middle of winter, compoſed of ſuch numbers as to exceed the powers of imagination; but they no ſooner leave their retreats, than millions of enemies appear to thin their ſquadrons. The ſun-fiſh, and the cachalot devour thouſands at a time; the porpus, the grampus, the ſhark, the cod-fiſh, haddocks, pollacks, and the numerous train of dog-fiſh, find them an eaſy prey, and deſiſt from making war upon each other: but ſtill more the unnumbered flocks of ſea-fowl, that chiefly inhabit near the Pole, watch the outſet of their dangerous migration, and ſpread extenſive ruin.

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In this exigence, the defenceleſs emigrants find no other ſafety but by crowding cloſe together, like ſheep when frightened, and leaving to the outmoſt bands the danger of being firſt devoured. The main body begins at a certain latitude to ſeparate into two great diviſions, one of which moves to the weſt, and pours down along the coaſts of America, as far ſouth as Carolina, and are ſo numerous in the Cheſapeak Bay, as to become a nuiſance to the ſhores. The other diviſion takes an eaſtern direction, towards Europe, and falls in with the great iſland of Iceland about the beginning of March. Upon their arrival on that coaſt, their phalanx, which hath already ſuffered conſiderable diminutions, is nevertheleſs found to be of amazing extent, depth*, and cloſeneſs, occupying a ſurface equal to the dimenſions of Great Britain, but ſubdivided into columns of five or ſix miles in length, and three or four in breadth, each line or column being led, according to

* Some writers affirm, that the depth of the ſhoals upon the coaſt of Norway reaches 200 fathoms from the ſurface of the ocean.

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the ideas of fiſhermen, by herrings of more than ordinary ſize. The herrings ſwim near the ſurface, ſinking now and then for ten or fifteen minutes. The fore-runners of thoſe who viſit the Britiſh kingdoms, appear off the Shetland iſlands in April or May, and the grand body begins to be perceived in June. Their approach is known to the fiſhers by a ſmall rippling of the water, the reflection of their brilliancy *, and the number of ſolan geeſe or gannets, and other aerial

* Except the mackerel, no fiſh is more beautiful when firſt taken than the herring. The fleſh of the herring is alſo perfectly white and moſt delicious, eſpecially of thoſe taken upon their firſt arrival, being then in the greateſt perfection, plump, rich, and high flavoured. The vicinity of Scotland to this early fiſhery gives the inhabitants a ſuperior advantage over all other nations for ſupplying the tables of the opulent with delicious fiſh, which however they have totally neglected, while the induſtrious Dutch have, for ſome centuries, ſupplied the greateſt part of Europe with theſe early herrings at more than double the price of thoſe taken in the latter ſeaſons. The herrings retain their original flavour and richneſs till the middle of July: from that period they gradually fall off in quality; and in winter, their ſpawning time, they become ſick and poor. This is however the ſeaſon when they abound moſt upon the Europeans ſhores, and is properly the great fiſhing ſeaſon.

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perſecutors, who feaſt richly upon this offered bounty; and who, with the marine attendants, may be a concurrent cauſe of driving the ſhoals into bays and creeks. Here new enemies await theſe heaven-directed ſtrangers. Whole fleets of Dutch, French, Flemiſh, Pruſſian, Dantzic, and Daniſh veſſels, with all the apparatus of netting, &c. are in readineſs on a fixed day, to drag the ocean, thereby ſnatching from the ſhoals not hundreds, but hundreds of thouſands, every night from the 24th of June till September.

The Shetland iſlands, where the herrings meet with the firſt interruption in their migration, lie at the diſtance of 100 miles due north from the mainland of Scotland, and extend almoſt a degree in length. Though theſe iſlands break and ſeparate the grand body of the herrings into two parts, the fiſh ſtill continue their courſe ſouthwards; one diviſion proceeds along the eaſt ſide of Britain, pays its tribute to the Orkneys, the Murray Firth, the coaſts of Aberdeen, Angus and Fife, the great river Forth, the coaſt of Yorkſhire, and particularly the far-projecting land at Yarmouth, which, by

thus

thus interrupting the ſhoals, enjoys the only certain periodical fiſhery in Great Britain, the Shetland fiſhery excepted. The herrings reach Yarmouth* about the 21ſt of September, and the fiſhery is carried on till the 25th of November. In the mean time the ſhoals, though thus haraſſed, broken, and reduced, preſs forward down the channel, where they pay a ſlight viſit to the north coaſt of France, but ſo exhauſted and impoveriſhed, that they are very improper for commercial purpoſes. The French, however, are glad of the offered bounty, which they redden for home ſale, and alſo pickle for the uſe of their ſugar colonies.

The other brigade take their courſe from the Shetland iſlands, along the weſt ſide of Britain, and are obſerved to be larger and

* The Yarmouth fiſhery is the moſt ancient on record in the Engliſh annals, and of which there are accounts from the firſt arrival of the Saxons in the fifth century. It is conjectured that this fiſhery, from its magnitude and duration, hath brought a ſum into the kingdom, equal to 20,000,000l. of the preſent money. The inhabitants build their veſſels, and fiſh after the Dutch manner: they are bold expert, fiſhermen; and they redden their herrings ſo admirably, that the preſent price of Yarmouth herrings is 52s. per barrel, while thoſe of Suſſex bring only 25s.

fatter

fatter than thoſe on the eaſt ſide. After leaving the Shetland and the Orkney iſles, they crowd in amazing quantities into the lakes, bays, and narrow channels of the north weſt Highlands, and Hebride iſles, which face that coaſt. From thence they preſs ſouthward amidſt the rapid currents, head lands, and other obſtructions of thoſe narrow ſeas; ſometimes viſiting, in ſmall detachments, the Firth of Clyde, Lochfine, and other lakes within the entrance of that river; and alſo the coaſt of Galloway and the Solway Firth. Having performed this friendly office to the weſtern ſhores of Scotland, the main ſhoal falls upon the north coaſt of Ireland; where, meeting with a ſecond interruption, they are again divided into two brigades: one ſhoal paſs down the Iriſh channel, viſit the Iſle of Man, and afford an occaſional ſupply to the eaſt coaſt of Ireland, and the weſt coaſt of England, particularly Biddeford Sound, at the ſouth entrance of the Britiſh Channel.

The other ſhoal ſkirt along the north-weſt coaſt of Ireland, where, after filling the lakes of Donnegal, they gradually diſappear and

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are loſt in the immmenſity of the Atlantic*.

Having thus traced the progreſſive migrations of theſe periodical viſitants on both ſides of Britain, we ſhall now ſtate the comparative advantages and diſadvantages of the two great weſtern fiſheries, upon the coaſts of Scotland and Ireland. It may be ſuppoſed that as both of theſe kingdoms are ſupplied by the ſame individual ſhoals paſſing through the Hebride ſeas, to the coaſt of Donnegal, there can be no material difference in the expence, hazard, and trouble attending the capture. Or, in other words, it may be ſuppoſed, that a Scottiſh fiſher may procure a cargo upon the north-weſt coaſt of that kingdom with the ſame facility, in the ſame time, and at the ſame expence, as an Iriſh fiſher upon the coaſt of Donnegal; from which it may be inferred, that a 30s. bounty, which is now paid to the fiſhers of both countries, puts them on a fair equality Were this the caſe,

* Beſides theſe migrating fiſh, there are alſo native herrings upon our ſhores, but their number is comparatively inconſiderable, affording only an occaſional ſupply of freſh herrings for home conſumption.

it would be only neceſſary on the part of the Britiſh Parliament, to continue the bounty of 30s. and thus the iſſue of the fiſhery would depend ſolely upon the induſtry and frugality of the two reſpective nations.

There is, however, a moſt material difference between the ſituation of the Scottiſh and the Iriſh fiſhers. Firſt, from natural cauſes; ſecondly, from the ſtate of the reſpective countries; and, thirdly, from the conſtruction of the fiſhery regulations in both kingdoms.

From the poverty of the inhabitants, and the want of towns on the north-weſt coaſt of Scotland, the fiſheries of thoſe ſhores are chiefly carried on by perſons reſiding at a great diſtance, as at Greenock, Port Glaſgow, and other trading towns upon the river and Firth of Clyde, who, in their firſt ſetting out, as well as their return, have to double a far projecting headland, called the Mull of Cantire, by which they ſuſtain conſiderable inconveniencies and diſcouragements. By Cantire is meant, a narrow peninſula, which ſtretches forty miles from the mainland of the weſt Highlands, in a ſouthern direction, till it approaches within thir-

thirteen miles of the county of Antrim in the north of Ireland.

The diſtance from Greenock to the promontory or cape, which terminates this peninſula, is above ſixty miles in a ſouth-weſt direction; but if we include the courſe of ſhipping thither, the iſlands to be avoided, the tacks and evolutions occaſioned by contrary winds and lee-ſhores, we may eſtimate the voyages from Greenock upon an average, at eighty miles each; which eighty miles, being a circuitous navigation, that muſt be made good on the oppoſite ſide of the cape, till the veſſels have got ſo far northward as to be on a line with Greenock, the place from whence they ſet out, occaſions an extra navigation of 160 miles; or 320 miles outward and homeward, to every veſſel or boat paſſing from the Clyde to the Hebride fiſhery. The loſs of time, the expence in proviſions and ſeamen's wages in performing this voyage, muſt be obvious to every reader; while a conſideration of ſtill greater importance remains to be mentioned. As there are no lands between this cape and America, and the prevailing winds being generally from

that quarter acroſs an ocean of 3000 miles, the collective force of theſe winds, and the weight of the Atlantic, fall with the moſt tremendous and awful velocity on the cape; which, had it not been compoſed of ſolid rock, muſt have yielded, long ſince, to thoſe raging elements. Veſſels, therefore, whether outward or homeward bound, but more eſpecially the former, are frequently under the neceſſity of taking ſhelter in ſome commodious port, creek, or bay, till the ſtorms abate, till the winds prove favourable, and the paſſage becomes practicable. For, unleſs the wind be moderate as well as fair, the buſſes and all other ſmall veſſels dare not proceed, and thoſe who are hardy enough to make the attempt in rough weather ſometimes founder in the croſs and rapid currents that run at the cape, and add very conſiderably to its dangers.

Nor are theſe the only difficulties which the buſſes have to encounter in this navigation. The wind that favoured the voyage down the Firth of Clyde becomes conſequently adverſe after having doubled the cape, when the veſſels have to ſteer in an oppoſite

oppoſite direction, and to encounter new toils and hazards.

Thus the Hebride fiſhery is attended, in the firſt inſtance, with conſiderable expence, as well as delay; and as all the hopes of the adventurers depend on a ſpeedy fiſhery, and a quick ſale, nothing can prove more diſcouraging than the impediments and uncertainty of this circumnavigation. Was the weſtern paſſage ſhortened *, theſe dangers and delays would be evaded; and the adventurers would be enabled to bring their fiſh to market in better time; which, from the above mentioned cauſes, cannot be accompliſhed at preſent with any degree of certainty. Ships, it is well known, often wait ſeveral weeks in the ports of the Clyde for the arrival of the herrings, and are frequently obliged to ſail without them. Thus the adventurers loſe their market for the ſeaſon, the merchants loſe their freights, the planters their ſupply

* Againſt ſuch a multiplicity of evils, nature hath fortunately provided a remedy, in forming a ſhort iſthmus acroſs the peninſula of Cantire, which admits of an inland paſſage, whereby this long and difficult navigation may be avoided.

of proviſions, and the unhappy negroes their regular ſupport. Soon after the departure of theſe ſhips, the buſſes, which had been detained on the weſt ſide of the cape by unfavourable weather, arrive, not ſingly, but in fleets, which occaſions a glut in the home market, greatly to the prejudice of the adventurers in general; while ſome are thus totally diſabled from continuing the buſineſs.

The veſſels having, in the outward-bound voyage, cleared the Mull of Cantire, they arrive upon a coaſt of 240 miles in length from that promontory to Cape Wrath; and if, to that extent, we add the numerous headlands to be doubled, the intervening iſlands to be evaded, the creeks or bays to which a veſſel muſt frequently run for ſhelter, a winter voyage from Greenock may, upon an average, require two or three weeks.

After the veſſel hath ſurmounted the difficulties and dangers of this intricate navigation, ſhe does not arrive at a certain fiſhery, where ſhe may load by her own boats, or thoſe of the inhabitants, in a few days. Though the migrations of the herrings to

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the north-weſt Highlands be certain, their arrival in one particular loch, bay, or iſland, is very precarious.

All have their turns. The loch that was crowded with fiſh one year may be quite deſerted the following, and for many years after. Sometimes they fall in between the Mainland and the Long Iſland*; at other times, they keep out in the main ocean between the Long Iſland and the rocks of St. Kilda, which lie 54 miles weſt of that iſland, and are ſurrounded with fiſh and ſea fowl in boundleſs numbers. When this happens, there can be no boat fiſhery, eſpecially in winter; neither is there any buſs fiſhery; thoſe veſſels not being accuſtomed to the Dutch method of a floating fiſhery, by following the ſhoals through the ocean.

* The north-weſt coaſt of Scotland is covered by 300 iſlands, called the Hebrides, of which the Long Iſland is the moſt extenſive. It lies due north and ſouth in the main ocean, at the diſtance of 30 to 60 miles from the Continent, and is nearly 140 miles in length. It is this double coaſt, and the numerous openings or lakes on the Mainland and the iſlands, that render the fiſhery ſo uncertain, and which engage the buſſes ſo long in cruiſing from place to place to find out the herrings.

The young herrings always come in a body ſome time in June; their ſtay depends on the winds and weather. Thoſe which fall in between the Mainland and the Long Iſland are wrought upon and directed, not only by the winds, but alſo by the large fiſhes, and ſometimes by the buſſes, in their cruiſes from place to place.

As the ſeaſon advances, the great ſhoals of full grown herrings appear on the coaſts, moving ſouthward. If, upon their approach, the weather happens to be ſtormy, and the winds from ſouth-weſt to north-weſt, the ſhoals, thus interrupted by a ſtrong head wind, crowd into the openings or lochs, and there is every probability of a ſucceſsful fiſhery, either on the Lewis coaſt or that of the Mainland. But if the winds happen to be eaſterly, or within the eaſtern points, as is often the caſe towards the end of harveſt, there is little chance of a winter fiſhery, becauſe, as before obſerved, the herrings keep out in the main ocean. Nature, in this reſpect, gives the Iriſh fiſhers a manifeſt advantage over the Scots. The ſhoals, after having cleared the Scottiſh ſeas, whether their

voyage

voyage hath been on this ſide the Long Iſland, or on the weſt ſide, have to encounter a ſtill more turbulent ſea, owing to the great weight and ſwell of the Atlantic being oppoſed by the lofty coaſt of Donnegal; which, with the jarring currents and tides, interrupt the progreſs of the herrings, who, fatigued and weak, are glad to take ſhelter in the openings or lochs of that coaſt. This circumſtance gives the Iriſh an abſolute certainty of an annual fiſhery, and that fiſhery being drawn towards one point, enables the adventurers to double the gains of their neighbours, and with little trouble, hazard, or delay.

To this advantage which the Iriſh fiſhers enjoy, and of which thoſe of the oppoſite coaſt of Scotland are deprived, is to be added the population, towns, ſhipping, and capital of the former. From the Mull of Cantire to the moſt northern extremity of Scotland, the whole coaſt preſents a uniform picture of poverty and diſtreſs, without towns, marts, ſtores, capital, or veſſels proper for the expenſive, though precarious buſineſs of fiſheries; on which account theſe hazardous undertakings

ings are carried on by people who, as before obſerved, reſide at the diſtance of ſome hundred miles from the ſhores where the herrings chiefly reſort. The merchants, traders, coopers and ſeafaring people of Greenock, Port Glaſgow, Rothſay and Campbeltown, are the perſons to whom the public owe the exiſtence of a regular herring fiſhery on the coaſts of Scotland; and it is againſt theſe perſons that ſo much combuſtion is daily levelled, by ſome of their uninformed or narrow-minded countrymen.

Very different is the ſituation of the fiſhing coaſt in Ireland. That kingdom is divided into four provinces, the moſt northerly of which is named Ulſter, and it is on the north-weſt coaſt of this province, particularly the extenſive maritime county of Donnegal, where the herrings take ſhelter and embay themſelves in, generally, one or other of the following lochs, and ſometimes in all of them, viz. Loch Swilly, the Roſſes, Killeybeggs, and Inverbay.

The herrings frequently crowd to the very head of theſe waters, in compact bodies, where they

they are taken with the greateſt eaſe by the numerous well-equipped boats, which annually await their arrival in each reſpective loch. Here are alſo ſtorehouſes with ſalt and every neceſſary for the buſineſs: but the life of the whole conſiſts in the numerous ſea-port towns which line the coaſt of this province, ſome of them conſiderable, and all of them engaged more or leſs in ſhipping, commerce, coaſting trade, fiſheries, or ſalt works. Theſe are Carlingford, Newry, Dundrum, Strangford, Portaferry, Downpatrick, Killilea, Killoch, Comber, Newtown, Belfaſt, Carricfergus, Donaghadee, Larne, Coleraine, Londonderry, Roſſes, Killeybegs, Donnegal, Ballyſhannon, Sligoe, Killalla, &c. Some of theſe towns are ſituated upon, or within a few miles of the ſhores where the herrings moſtly abound; as Londonderry, which is only four miles from Loch Swilly; and the moſt diſtant town is within two days ſailing, in moderate weather, of the coaſt of Donnegal. New towns are alſo erecting in the moſt eligible ſituations, furniſhed with every accommoda-

tion

tion and requiſite for extending that great national branch, towards which the Iriſh Parliament granted lately, in one vote, 20,000l.

Having thus ſtated the advantages of the Iriſh fiſheries, Firſt, from natural cauſes, and, Secondly, from the preſent ſtate of the reſpective countries, I ſhall cloſe this comparative review of the ſeveral fiſheries, by contraſting the regulations and encouragements of the Britiſh and Iriſh Parliaments.

By the Britiſh laws, the buſſes were prohibited from purchaſing herrings from the Highland boats, on penalty of forfeiting the bounty; and inſtead thereof, they were to fiſh for the herrings themſelves, till the expiration of three months from the time of their clearing out, unleſs they had ſooner completed their loading. This reſtraint was a grievous hardſhip to the poor natives, whoſe fiſheries were thus limited to their own conſumption; and the ſupply of the thinly inhabited wilds of their neighbourhood. It ruined the boat fiſhery, diſcouraged induſtry, and left theſe unhappy people ſolely at the mercy of every tackſman or ſteward, who might

might chooſe to oppreſs them in all their operations by land and water.

The object which Government had principally in view by theſe bounties, was the raiſing a numerous body of intrepid, hardy ſeamen, ſkilled in the principles of practical navigation, who might be ready upon every emergency to man the royal navy. With this view it was judged expedient to oblige the buſſes to remain on the fiſhing grounds during a given period, and there to be employed in the exerciſe of fiſhing.

It may be obſerved that there are two methods of taking the herrings. Firſt, the floating fiſheries, by conſtantly dragging the ſea, under ſail, as practiſed by the Dutch. Secondly, the ſtationary or ground fiſheries upon the ſhores, bays, or lakes, where the buſſes caſt anchor, and remain paſſive during the whole period of the fiſhery, which is performed in the following manner. Every buſs hath two or three ſmall boats, and a proportionable number of men and nets. From theſe boats the nets are ſuſpended and hauled in ſucceſſively, between ſun-ſet and day-light next morning; when the men, fatigued

and drenched in wet, board their reſpective buſſes.

This method of fiſhing, inſtead of training ſeamen, ſubjects the men to unneceſſary hardſhips, and the owners to burdenſome expenditures in proviſions, liquors, and wages; while the merchants or purchaſers are equal, if not greater ſufferers, by the delays occaſioned through this tedious method of procuring cargoes. And, it is alſo certain, that though the buſſes are thus detained upon a ſedentary fiſhery, they ſeldom return home with more than half their loading; whereas, a permiſſion to purchaſe herrings, as well as to fiſh, would enable the veſſels to return earlier, and with better cargoes, to the mutual benefit of all parties concerned, from the poor half-ſtarved Highlander upon the ſhores of the Hebrides, to the equally wretched being who toils under the burning ſun of the Weſt-Indies.

Since, therefore, the mere act of fiſhing, while the veſſel lies at anchor, is extremely diſcouraging to that branch in every reſpect, as well as to individuals of all deſcriptions; and,

and, ſince it is likewiſe evident, that this reſtraining method anſwers no beneficial purpoſe to Government, it would be expedient to allow thoſe people a free diſcretionary power to take, to purchaſe, or do both; and in every reſpect to act as circumſtances may dictate for their own intereſt, from the time of their firſt arrival amongſt the herrings till their departure.

All the purpoſes of Government are effectually anſwered *in the voyages to and from the fiſhing grounds.* No ſeas between the two extremes of the earth are better adapted for training mariners; inſomuch, that the Hebride fiſhery may be juſtly ſtyled the ſchool of navigation. In a voyage to America, or the Cape of Good Hope, the veſſel follows one courſe; and as the winds keep moſtly in one direction, the ſails are ſet, and the men remain inactive, or nearly ſo, after leaving Ireland, till they approach the diſtant land. But in a voyage from the Clyde to the uſual reſorts of the herrings on the north-weſt ſhores of Scotland, the veſſel no ſooner clears one cape, than another appears; which, to weather, is moſt generally attended with difficulties

ties and hazards: the helm muſt be in the hands of an experienced ſeaman; the ſails and rigging require unremitting attention; the men are conſtantly in motion, ſtruggling and toiling without ceaſing, day and night: and ſo hazardous and fatiguing is this navigation through the winter, when the frequent hurricanes threaten deſtruction on every ſide, that the ſafe return of the buſſes ſeems miraculous, even to men who have ſpent their lives in the mercantile ſervice, or the royal navy.

The ſeamanſhip acquired in theſe narrow channels would be ſtill further promoted, by permitting the veſſels, inſtead of lying at anchor in the lochs, to load and carry home at pleaſure; becauſe the ſame veſſels would have a chance of making three or four voyages in the ſeaſon, inſtead of one or two. This is the method obſerved by the Dutch: ſome veſſels ſend home their cargoes by yawgers that attend the fiſheries for that purpoſe; while others are their own carriers.

"The inſtant the buſſes have diſcharged their cargoes, they are refitted for ſea; and as the herrings make an annual tour round Great

Great Britain, experience has taught the Dutchman where to proceed on his ſecond voyage, and to be ſure of his game. While the buſſes are out on their ſecond voyage, the proprietors on ſhore are buſy in taking out the fiſh packed at ſea, and repacking them with freſh pickle for exportation."

This is alſo the practice of the Iriſh buſſes, who being under no legal reſtraints, frequently make their cargoes in a few days, which they land at the principal ſea ports, from whence they return immediately for another cargo, and are again loaded with ſurpriſing diſpatch.

Thus the Iriſh, Dutch, and all nations who engage in the fiſheries, are enabled to go to market early, and ſucceſſively, while the Scots are detained at anchor in the lochs of the North Highlands till the markets have been ſupplied by their neighbours.

The Iriſh bounty laws do not require the ſame number of men as thoſe of Great Britain, and conſequently the Iriſh fiſher ſaves 30 or 40 per cent in wages, proviſions, and ſtores, to which the fiſher from Scotland is ſubject. Neither is the former under any

reſtraint reſpecting netting; nor indeed is it neceſſary to burden their fiſhers with theſe heavy expences, ſince they permit the veſſels to load immediately from the boats.

Thus the Iriſh buſſes are merely carrying veſſels, equipped at the eaſieſt expence, with a ſlender view to the raiſing of ſeamen; while thoſe of Scotland are tied down to expenſive regulations, with a view to the navy as the principal object.

Upon the whole, the concluſion to be drawn from the above enumerated circumſtances ariſing from natural, accidental, and political cauſes, ſeems to be this: that a 30s. bounty in Ireland is preferable, or at leaſt equal, to a 50s. bounty in Scotland.

The Scottiſh traders and fiſhers are, however, well diſpoſed to meet Government half way. Two years ago they propoſed to apply for 50s. which was given formerly to the Britiſh Fiſhery Company; but in conſideration of ſundry obſtructions being lately removed, and the aſſurances they have received, that other impediments with which the fiſheries are ſhackled will alſo be removed, the major part of the perſons en-

gaged in the Hebride fiſhery have declared, that, if Government ſhall extend the bounty from 30 to 40s. they will again reſume the buſineſs with vigour: and I am fully perſuaded, that in leſs than three years, from the commencement of a 40s. bounty, a ſum exceeding 100,000l. will be expended by thoſe people, in building and equipping decked veſſels, provided that the duration of ſuch bounty be extended to 15 or rather to 21 years, the uſual period wherein Britiſh built veſſels may be navigated with ſafety to the men and cargoes.

SECTION VI.

HAVING conſidered the buſs fiſhery as beſt adapted to the Scottiſh ſeas, and as the ſtamina of the whole buſineſs; it is alſo propoſed to admit ſubordinate orders of men to a proportionable ſhare of the public aid; without which their profeſſion cannot, in many parts, be improved beyond its preſent low ſtate, as the experience of ſixty years

fully ſhows. Let the public munificence be extended to that claſs of people, whoſe united exertions are limited to the equipment of open boats or wherries. Let theſe be regiſtered, and put under the ſame regulations as the buſſes, reſpecting the dimenſions and conſtruction of the boat, the quantity of netting, and the number of men.

When we conſider the great extent of coaſt in Scotland, and the uncertain arrival of the herrings in any particular ſpot*, it does not appear that men can follow this buſineſs as their ſole profeſſion, through the whole year, or even during three months, unleſs they ſhall be aſſiſted with an annual bounty or premium of 15l. for each boat or wherry, carrying five men and a boy; which ſum, though

* This hath been uſed as the main argument in favour of a tonnage bounty to decked veſſels; and it operates with ſtill greater force when applied to open boats, who muſt not, particularly in the winter ſeaſon, venture too far from home. They have therefore only an occaſional fiſhery when the ſhoals of herrings happen to fall upon their reſpective ſhores, or lakes. It is on this account, that though the coaſt of Scotland is lined with boats, there are few perſons who come under the deſcription of regular fiſhers.

ſmall, would go a great way towards the annual repairs and outfit, while the ſale of fiſh caught would, one year with another, ſupport their families in the common neceſſaries of life.

Boats of a larger conſtruction, ſuch as are uſed at preſent in the Murray Firth, having ſix oars, and carrying ſeven men, or ſeven men and a boy, might be entitled to 21l. per annum. Boats of theſe different conſtructions, viz. the four-oared boat, the ſix-oared boat, and the wherry, would ſuit the various coaſts of the kingdom, and alſo the reſpective abilities of the owners or fiſhers.

By this ſimple method of diffuſing the public aid proportionably to the ſizes of veſſels and expence of the equipment, the buſſes and boats would aſſiſt each other for their mutual benefit, of which the community in general, and the weſt Highlands in particular, where the great ſtrength of the fiſhery lies, would ſoon feel the benefits.

As a nurſery for ſeamen, the boat fiſhery will greatly exceed that by the buſſes in numbers; while the expence, per man, to

Government, will be conſiderably leſs*: but, on the other hand, it cannot be put into competition with the buſs fiſheries in nautical knowledge †. It may be conſidered as the firſt ſtep towards ſeamanſhip, which, without the ſubſequent experience acquired on board decked veſſels, leaves the men only one degree removed from their original ſtate, while at the plow or the ſpade.

A young man iſſues from the glens and wilds of the Highlands, in order to mend his fortune; he engages with the maſter of a boat for a time, returns home with a little money, expatiates on the wonders he hath ſeen, the dangers he hath encountered, and fancies himſelf qualified for entering on board a decked veſſel. Here he is ridiculed as a novice in his trade; but that inherent prin-

* See the table, page 10.

† Neither can the boats venture to ſea at all times, by which a valuable fiſhery is frequently loſt, though the herrings abound on the coaſt, of which there was an inſtance at Dunbar laſt ſeaſon, when the boats were deterred, by the roughneſs of the weather, from venturing out. Had there been ſome decked veſſels on the ſpot, it is probable that the owners would have realized conſiderable ſums.

ciple

ciple of honour ſo conſpicuous in Highlandmen, aided by the excellent ſchool—*a Hebride buſs navigation*, qualifies him, in one or two ſeaſons only, to ſteer by compaſs, to work the ſails, and to perform the various operations of experienced ſeamen: he now, in turn, ridicules the boat fiſhers, whom he calls land-lubbers; and having ſeen the ſhipping of the Clyde, he becomes emulous of greater preferment, affects the appearance of a ſmart ſeaman, and embarks upon a voyage to America or the Weſt Indies, which completes his education. By this gradation, the poor hopeleſs boy, inſtead of ſtarving with his parents and kindred, amongſt obſcure deſerts, becomes a moſt uſeful member of the community, qualified, when his country calls, to co-operate with the brave tars of the ſouth, in whatever ſervice that country may require *.

It

* Immediately before the year 1750, the decked veſſels belonging to Campbeltown were four, and theſe of ſmall ſize; the number of men 30 or 40. In 1777, the number of buſſes belonging to that port had encreaſed to 62, manned with 7 or 800 hardy, and, for the moſt part, experienced ſailors.

It may be ſuppoſed by ſome perſons who are unacquainted with the Scottiſh ſeas and fiſheries, as well as the diſpoſition of the Highlanders, that the number of buſſes, boats and men, propoſed to be thus raiſed, far exceeds probability. To enter upon a minute detail of the various particulars and circumſtances from which I have formed the calculation, is not at preſent neceſſary; I ſhall only therefore ſpeak in general terms.

By the ſtatement already inſerted from the Cuſtom-houſe books, it appears that between the years 1759 and 1766, the number of buſſes had increaſed from 3 to 261, and theſe

ſailors. During the courſe of the laſt war, nearly 1000 men, who had been trained in the buſs fiſhery belonging to that port, entered, in various parts of the world, on board the royal navy, or were preſſed into the ſervice. Two thirds of the ſeamen, who ſail from the Clyde in the mercantile ſervice, have been trained to that buſineſs by the buſſes engaged in the Hebride fiſhery; and it is well known, that the naval officers are particularly fond of the *blue bonnets*, viz. Highland ſailors, for the moſt part, on account of their hardineſs, temperance, and ſober manners. Above 100 of theſe blue bonnets have been counted on board a ſhip of the line at one time.

were

were employed on the weſtern coaſt only. It is alſo certain that the following number of boats have been employed, viz.

1600 Highland wherries in the Firth of Clyde, carrying 4 men each.

700 Boats in the Forth, carrying 9 men each.

600 Ditto in the Murray Firth, carrying 7 men each.

2000 Wherries were afloat laſt ſeaſon on the coaſt of the weſt Highlands and Hebride Iſles, in virtue of the new law, which permits the buſſes to purchaſe herrings from the boats at the end of a three months trip; theſe exertions, great as they may ſeem, were trifling to what a general national fiſhery admits of in every ſea, channel, and lake of the kingdom.

The line of coaſt around Scotland meaſures above 600 miles; and that of the Hebride, the Orkney, and the Shetland iſles, was each iſland meaſured apart, would, in the aggregate, exceed the Mainland by ſome hundred miles. To theſe two numbers, we are to add 2 or 300 lakes, bays, or openings, extend-

extending from 1 to 20 miles inland, whoſe aggregate meaſurement it is difficult to aſcertain with preciſion, and muſt therefore be left to the conjectures of thoſe who take the trouble of looking at the map.

All theſe ſhores may be conſidered as one continued inexhauſtible fiſhery; for though the herring fiſhery on the weſt coaſt is ſometimes unſucceſsful, and ruinous to the owners of decked veſſels, yet, it is a certain fact, that the ſhoals do actually paſs from the Shetland iſlands to the north of Ireland once every year, moſt generally between July and November.

The failure of theſe fiſheries in ſome years is not, therefore, owing to the non-exiſtence of the migrating ſhoals; but, as before obſerved, to the uncertainty of their tract or courſe between the Mainland of Scotland and the Latitude of St. Kilda, the moſt diſtant iſland of the Hebrides, which lies above 100 miles due-weſt from the Continent.

Beſides the herring fiſhery upon the coaſts of Scotland, thoſe ſhores abound in all the varieties

varieties of white-fiſh, flat-fiſh and ſhell-fiſh, peculiar to northern latitudes.

But the greateſt and moſt certain fiſheries are thoſe of the northern ocean, occupying a ſpace of ſome hundred miles between the coaſt of Norway on the eaſt, the great iſland of Iceland on the weſt, and Scotland on the ſouth, where the maritime nations of Europe ſend veſſels annually, not only for herrings, but white-fiſh of large ſize and excellent flavour, which gives them a preference at foreign markets to thoſe taken on the Banks of Newfoundland.

In all theſe fiſheries, viz. thoſe immediately upon our coaſts, and thoſe in the main ocean, the Scots have made very inconſiderable progreſs, owing partly to the ſalt regulations, and the want of parliamentary ſupport adequate to the expence of the equipment, and the hazards and extreme drudgery of the fiſhers, which, eſpecially in the winter ſeaſons, exceed all powers of deſcription.

Were Parliament to afford the relief which ſeems indiſpenſibly neceſſary, for enabling the Britiſh fiſhers to go to market upon

upon equal terms with Norwegians, Swedes, and the fiſhers from the Baltic, who have the materials of building, nets, cordage, &c. at a trifling expence, beſides the lowneſs of wages, our own people, who are not defective in perſeverance would explore the ocean in every direction, and bring to their native country an annual flux of wealth, ſuperior, in many reſpects, to that which Spain receives, in cargoes of gold and ſilver, from Peru and Mexico.

Or, were the Britiſh Parliament diſpoſed to put our herring fiſhery on the ſame footing with that of Ireland, one eſſential purpoſe, the manning of our navy, would, at leaſt, be effected. The comparative advantages given to the Iriſh fiſhers over thoſe of Great Britain are thus brought into one view, viz.

Iriſh Fiſhery Laws.	*Britiſh Fiſhery Laws.*
1.	1.
In 1762, the Iriſh Parliament granted an annual bounty of 20s. per ton to the owners of veſſels employed in the herring or white fiſheries, carrying from 20 to 80 tons burden. In 1785, the tonnage	In 1750, the Britiſh Parliament granted an annual bounty of 30s. per ton to the owners of veſſels employed in the herring fiſhery, carrying from 20 to 80 tons; alſo 3l. *per cent. per annum*, on the capital actually em-

bounty

Iriſh Fiſhery Laws.

bounty was extended from 20 to 30s. and a new ſet of fiſhery laws enacted, from which the following obſervations are extracted.

2.

A bounty of 3l. per ton is to be paid to perſons who build on the north-weſt coaſt, any veſſels fit for fiſhing in deep water, not under 20 tons, nor upwards of 60 tons, and launched before the 31ſt of December, 1788, but not to receive any other bounty by this act, for two years following.

3.

Every veſſel on the herring and white fiſheries muſt have 4 men for the firſt 20 tons, and one additional man for every 8 tons, by which veſſels ſhall exceed that burden.

		Men.
20	Tons burden.	4
28	-	5
36	-	6
44	-	7
52	-	8
60	-	9
68	-	10
76	-	11

Britiſh Fiſhery Laws.

ployed in the fiſhery. In 1757, the tonnage bounty was extended to 50s. In 1771, it was reduced to 30s. and the 3 per cent. on the capital taken off.

2.

No encouragement of this nature is given to fiſhers in Britain.

3.

Every veſſel on the Britiſh white herring fiſhery muſt have 5 men for the firſt 20 tons, and one additional man for every 5 tons.

Tons.	Men.	Tons.	Men.
20	6	55	13
25	7	60	14
30	8	65	15
35	9	70	16
40	10	75	17
45	11	80	18
50	12		

4. The

Iriſh Fiſhery Laws.

4.

The Iriſh laws lay the fiſhers under no reſtrictions reſpecting the quantity of nets to be on board.

5.

Veſſels on the Iriſh herring fiſhery may either fiſh, purchaſe, or do both, and proceed directly to the market, or port from whence they came.

Britiſh Fiſhery Laws.

4.

The Britiſh laws on this head require, for veſſels carrying

Tons.		Yds. of Net.
20	-	6,000
30	-	9,000
40	-	12,000
60	-	18,000
70	-	21,000
80	-	24,000

5.

Veſſels are to remain at ſea, or on the fiſhing grounds, for the ſpace of three months, unleſs they ſhall have ſooner completed their loading of fiſh, *caught ſolely by the crew of each reſpective veſſel*; or having not completed full cargoes, they may, at the end of three months, purchaſe herrings from Britiſh ſubjects.

Iriſh Fiſhery Laws.

6.

When any veſſel on her fiſhery voyage ſhall founder at ſea, or, by diſtreſs and hardſhip of weather, be forced on ſhore and wrecked, it ſhall and may be lawful for the Commiſſioners of his Majeſty's revenue to order payment of the bounty to the owners of ſaid veſſel, or in caſe of their being loſt, to the legal repreſentatives of ſaid owners.

7.

No cuſtom-houſe fees ſhall be taken from owners of fiſhing veſſels; and all certificates and other papers tranſmitted by poſt ſhall be exempted from poſtage.

8.

Engliſh rock-ſalt is exported to Ireland duty free, which, being of a ſtrong and good quality, is more proper for curing fiſh than ſalt made from ſea water in theſe kingdoms.

Britiſh Fiſhery Laws.

6.

No bounty is allowed to owners, or their repreſentatives, on buſſes loſt or wrecked. The only indulgence in this caſe is a remiſſion of the duty upon ſalt, carried out by ſuch veſſels.

7.

The fees exacted by cuſtom-houſe officers amount, on ſmall veſſels, to one-fourth or fifth of the bounty; and all papers are ſubject to poſtage.

8.

No rock-ſalt is allowed to be imported into Scotland, on which account, when (as in time of war) foreign ſalt cannot be eaſily procured, the Scots are obliged to purchaſe rock-ſalt in Ireland, and to pay the full duties on the ſame, though imported into Ireland upon a debenture or drawback.

9. Fiſheries

Iriſh Fiſhery Laws.	*Britiſh Fiſhery Laws.*
9.	9.
Fiſheries may be carried on in all ſeaſons of the year, provided that the fry be not deſtroyed.	Veſſels on the herring bounty are to clear out any time after the 1ſt of June, and to ceaſe from fiſhing after the 12th of January, though at that period the largeſt herrings are frequently found in ſhoals upon the weſt coaſt of Scotland.
10.	10.
The Iriſh ſalt laws are ſimple and well adapted to fiſhers of every deſcription.	The Britiſh ſalt laws have proved extremely perplexing to the northern fiſheries, beſides the expenſive fees attending them.

From this comparative review of the Hebride fiſheries, the reader will wonder how the diſtreſſed Scotchmen have been able to maintain their ground ſo long; but as this ſyſtem is now in a fair train of being amended, and having already ſpoken ſo fully on the ſubject, I ſhall only further advert to the clauſe which obliges the Scottiſh fiſhers to engage, maintain, and pay a greater number of men than the fiſhers of Ireland, or any other country. The Iriſh laws are calculated for promoting the fiſheries, *as the primary object*; while thoſe of Great Britain

tain are chiefly framed for *raiſing a numerous body of ſeamen*. It ſeems therefore unreaſonable to lay this extra expence on the ſhoulders of the Scottiſh fiſhers, who, as appears from the decreaſe of their buſineſs, are utterly unable to bear it.

If the defence of the nation be the main object, ſurely that nation ought to be at the expence of protecting their own property; of preſerving their conſols, navy bills, goods, chattels, and lands, from ſinking to half of their preſent value. But if the nation ſhall be diſpoſed to rely upon the number and magnitude of its ſhips only, in that caſe it would be doing the fiſhers an eſſential ſervice to releaſe them from the heavy expence in ſupporting men which that buſineſs, particularly on the eaſt coaſt, does not poſitively require.

We have ſeen the Yarmouth people preferring a free fiſhery, without the bounty, to a bounty fiſhery ſaddled with expences and reſtrictions to which the public aid was inadequate. We have alſo ſeen the Scottiſh merchants and curers on the eaſt-ſide of that kingdom abandon the whole buſineſs ſo

completely, that they have not fitted out ſix veſſels annually, upon an average, during theſe laſt twenty years. We have ſeen the weſt-country people, Highlanders, as well as perſons of more opulent circumſtances upon the Clyde, ſtruggling with almoſt unparalleled diſcouragements, and at laſt, after an experiment of twenty-one years, reduced, a ſecond time, to the alternative of ſelling their veſſels, greatly under their value, or of fitting them out at 320l. each (beſides the original expence of building), upon voyages, which ſcarcely afford grounds for a forlorn hope, as will evidently appear by a peruſal of the following extracts from the memorials and letters from the fiſhing towns on the weſt of Scotland, delivered or tranſmitted to the author of theſe ſheets.

Memorial from the Magiſtrates, Traders, and Fiſhers in Campbeltown, Sept. 18, 1784.

DURING the late war, there were at leaſt 900 ſeamen in the navy, who had been originally bred to ſea at this port; this valuable nurſery, the memorialiſts are ſorry to remark, continues faſt on the decline, and muſt totally ſink, unleſs ſupported by ſome farther encou-

encouragement than the preſent. From ſad experience, they are ſo much convinced, that the bounty now given to buſſes is inadequate to indemnify them for the certain neceſſary expence of outfit, even though their ſucceſs ſhould far exceed that of late years, that they this ſeaſon rather prefer employing many of their veſſels, during the winter, as carriers to others, than engage in a certain great expence in fitting them out as buſſes for a fiſhery, which, in years of ordinary ſucceſs, they find to be a loſing trade. An accurate ſtatement of the expence of a buſs of 60 tons accompanying this*, and the advantages to the adventurer, when ſhe has been even ſo ſucceſsful as to take the half of

* See *View of the Britiſh Empire*, vol. I, page 231. See alſo, a ſimilar ſtatement on a buſs of 47 tons, in the third report from the committee appointed to enquire into the ſtate of the Britiſh fiſheries, page 241, wherein it appears that a buſs of 47 tons, carrying 240 barrels, between 1778 and 1784, caught only 110 barrels in a ſeaſon, and after receiving the bounty of 30s. per ton, the owners loſt on every voyage, on an average, 60l. 4s. 10d. It further appears, that, had the veſſel caught her full cargo of 240 barrels, which ſeldom happens, the owners would have cleared only 24l. 19s. 2d. for all their trouble and loſs of time, in the proceſs of the buſineſs.

her cargo of fiſh, will ſhew Mr. Knox, that, after the expence of the voyage is diſcharged, all that will remain to the adventurer, for paying commiſſion, port charges, and other unavoidable coſts at market, and to ſupport himſelf and family for a ſeaſon, is only the ſmall ſum of 2l. 6s. 7d.

Cuſtom-houſe, Oban, Sept. 25, 1784.

That from the year 1765, and during the continuance of the 50s. bounty, and until the year 1772, there was employed in the white herring buſs fiſhery, upon this and the adjacent coaſts, particularly from the places after mentioned, between the Mull of Cantire and the Iſland of Sky, 33 ſail; at preſent there are only 9. The principal cauſes of this decline in the number of veſſels were, firſt, the dilatory payments of the bounty during the latter part of the act allowing 50s. per ton; and, ſecondly, the reduction of the bounty from 50 to 30s. per ton.

The within and above ſtatements, extracted from the Cuſtom-houſe books, and are atteſted by

DUNCAN CAMPBELL, Collector.
JOHN LOWE, Surveyor.

Memorial

Memorial from Dunbarton, October 2, 1784.

That while the bounty of 50s. per ton was given to herring buſſes, this town ſent out four annually, at which time there were no other veſſels belonging to the place, and the aggregate burden of theſe amounted to near 200 tons. That although the tonnage of the veſſels fit for the fiſhing trade, preſently belonging to this place, has ſince increaſed to 2000 tons, yet there have no buſſes been ſent out from it for ſome years paſt; and the cauſes of the decreaſe are theſe, with conſiderable loſs to the adventurers, viz. the irregular payment of the bounty while at 50s. Secondly, the reduction of the bounty from 50 to 30s. per ton, with ſeveral obſtructions as to the ſalt and the fiſheries in general.

Glaſgow, October 5, 1784.

Mr. Mackenzie, maſter of a fiſhing veſſel, at Stranraer, in Wigtonſhire, being at preſent on a voyage to Glaſgow, declares, that when the bounty was 50s. per ton, the town of Stranraer had 16 or 18 buſſes in the herring fiſhery, which number is now reduced to four, and that the adventurers have of late

been conſiderable loſers. That if Government wiſh to revive this fiſhery, and raiſe a valuable nurſery of ſeamen, and ſhip-carpenters, it will be neceſſary to extend the bounty to 50s. and that punctually paid.

Memorial from Port Glaſgow, Oct. 9, 1784.

The conſiderable loſs incurred by proſecuting the herring fiſhing buſineſs, for a number of years paſt, will, in a ſhort time, oblige the adventurers to relinquiſh it altogether, if not prevented by ſome further encouragement from Government, owing to the great expence of the original and ſubſequent outfit, the loſs of nets, which annually may be reckoned at nearly a half of the whole quantity, men's wages, wear and tear, &c. At the commencement of the preſent bounty, the buſſes from this port amounted to upwards of 30 ſail, but the adventurers incurring an annual loſs from that period, they have gradually dwindled, and there now only remain 10 or 12 buſſes of the above number. Unleſs therefore Government grant us the bounty formerly given of 50s. per ton, we ſee no proſpect of carrying on this buſineſs

buſineſs to any kind of advantage; it will continue to decline, and be finally giv up, however valuable as a national object as a nurſery for ſeamen, and in ſupporti g and employing the poor of this country.

Memorial from Greenock, October 11, 1784.

The preſent bounty on buſſes is too ſmall, and ſhould be augmented to 40 or 50s. This is the great cauſe of the decline of the fiſhery; for, in 1777, the number of buſſes fitted out from this port was no leſs than 138; whereas the number fitted out laſt year was only 40.

Letter from a Mercantile Company in Greenock, October 11, 1784.

We were, for a conſiderable time, concerned in the white-herring fiſhery; but, for many reaſons, found it not worth the proſecuting.

Memorial from Rothſay, Oct. 13, 1784.

It is the opinion of the moſt experienced adventurers in the herring fiſhing, that we never ſhall find it a permanent or profitable

trade, unleſs extended and improved by the ſtrongeſt exertions of all who are intereſted in it, and thoſe are *the whole inhabitants of Britain*, from the King downwards. By a ſchedule herewith delivered *, you can, at a glance, diſcover the advantages to the revenue, the navy, the merchant, the tradeſman, manufacturers, and at laſt to the landholders —greateſt part of the money ariſing from the ſale of fiſh, enter into their coffers. Though the adventurers ſhould loſe money, the poor people employed by them make profit and get ſubſiſtence, and, for the neceſſaries of life, pay away their money to the proprietors of lands, or their agents. One acre of land contiguous to a town, or even a village, yields more rent than 10 acres in a remote corner, conſequently it is the intereſt of landholders to ſupport our trade. Theſe things being premiſed, and muſt be admitted, becauſe facts are ſtubborn things, we mean to come to the point in view, and that is,—unleſs our Legiſlature do heartily concur in giving their ſtrongeſt ſupport, we ſoon will

* This intereſting paper is inſerted at large in *The View of the Britiſh Empire*, vol. I, page 236.

loſe

loſe our fiſhing trade; the conſequence inevitably muſt be the loſs of a nurſery for able and the moſt hardy ſeamen; the loſs of our Weſt-India trade; and of thouſands of poor people who muſt emigrate to other nations for ſupport. For prevention of which calamities, we would propoſe, that in place of 30 a bounty of 50s. (as before given) ſhould now be paid to all buſſes from 20 to 80 tons, and to continue as long as 14 to 20 years, or more. That a bounty of 3l. 10s. ſhould be paid for 6 years, to every buſs who would fiſh after the deep ſea method, as the Dutch do, and a premium of 10 guineas to every buſs maſter who would get a cargo every year of the ſix.

Memorial from Saltcoats, February 12, 1785.

The cauſe of the decline of the herring fiſhery was partly owing to the bounty not being regularly paid when at 50s. At that time there were 12 buſſes belonging to Saltcoats, and at preſent there are only 5. When the bounty was reduced from 50 to 30s. it was found not to be equal to the great expence of fitting out and keeping up theſe buſſes,

ſo

ſo that the adventurers became loſers by the buſineſs. The beſt means, therefore, to encourage the white herring fiſhery will be to encreaſe the bounty to 50s. and to be paid regularly.

Joint Memorial from the Adventurers in the white herring fiſhery reſiding in the burghs of Rothſay, and Campbeltown, and towns of Greenock and Port Glaſgow, dated Greenock, March 8, 1785.

This general convention of the principal traders and adventurers in the herring buſineſs aroſe from an alarm that the method of beſtowing the public aid was to be altered from a tonnage bounty, to a bounty or premium upon the quantity of fiſh taken; and this, in conſequence of a plan ſuggeſted by a commiſſioner of the cuſtoms at Edinburgh, who, it muſt be confeſſed, hath been the cauſe of much uneaſineſs to the whole body of practical fiſhers and adventurers at preſent engaged in that loſing trade. Copies of this memorial were alſo ſent to the repreſentatives in parliament.

It contains in ſubſtance the ſame arguments

in

in favour of a tonnage bounty as have been already extracted from the detached memorials, ſent from the reſpective towns, and it may be ſeen at large in the third report of the committee on the Britiſh Fiſheries, July 14, 1785, page 247.

For further information on this important ſubject, the reader is referred to the following pages of the ſame report, viz. page 7, 12, 21, 45, 90, 238, 240, 242, 261, 270, 317, 391, 394, 402.

In ſome of the before-mentioned pages, a ſmall annual bounty or premium is alſo recommended to all boats properly manned and equipped, which ſhall proſecute the fiſheries through the whole year, or during the greateſt part of it; and I have to obſerve, that the boat fiſhers prefer this mode of encouragement to all other methods that have been, or can be deviſed. Were Government therefore to extend their aid to this numerous claſs of men the boat fiſhers, in the manner which ſeems moſt agreeable to their inclinations, all our northern fiſheries would be eſtabliſhed upon one ſimple principle, viz.

a bounty

a bounty of 40s per ton to veſſels employed in the Greenland fiſhery, which is now paid. ——Ditto to veſſels employed in the north-ſea herring and white fiſheries, which is earneſtly deſired by the parties concerned, and ſeems indiſputably neceſſary for the permanent eſtabliſhment of the ſame.—And, laſtly, 3l. per man to ſuch perſons as ſhall practice the boat fiſhery in the open ſeas, as well as in the firths and lochs, both for herrings and white fiſh.

We ſhall now take a general view of the expences to the adventurers, and the advantages to the public, from theſe fiſheries, compared with the body of ſeamen kept on the peace eſtabliſhment, viz.

	£.
18,000 men, at 52l. per man annually, are of no utility to trade or manufactures, and coſt Government	936,000
6000 men in the whale fiſhery ſave above 100,000l. to the nation, which otherwiſe would be paid to foreign ſtates for whale-bone and oil; the total expence of this body of men, at 19l. annually, is	114,000
	50,000

50,000 men in the northern herring and white fiſheries at 4l. per man annually.	200,000

However ſtriking the difference in the expence may appear; that, of the benefit to the community at large, is ſtill more obvious.

Thoſe of the firſt claſs already man our navy, but in other reſpects, while thus cooped up, are uſeleſs members to the nation.

A part of the ſecond claſs are qualified for the naval ſervice when called upon; and, the fiſhery keeps a conſiderable ſum at home annually; beſides the benefits gained by the owners, and by ſhip-builders.

Thoſe of the third claſs are ſtill better qualified for the naval ſervice; and when we further take into the account, the various profeſſions and deſcriptions of people who depend upon, or derive benefit from, this mighty branch, we fail in the attempt to do it juſtice. It is not only beyond compariſon the greateſt nurſery of ſeamen in theſe kingdoms, but alſo for carpenters and coopers, through whoſe combinations and extravagant demands *, the fitting out of our

* At the commencement of the late war, the coopers belonging

our fleets is retarded, and the purpoſes of the ſtate ſometimes fruſtrated. Againſt theſe evils, an extenſive herring and white fiſhery will have a good effect, by keeping always in readineſs above 1000 carpenters, and a ſtill greater number of coopers.

Theſe advantages to the building, equipping, and manning the navy, ſufficiently ballance any expence which the public beſtows in ſupport of the northern fiſheries. We have next to ſtate the circumſtances that relate to trade, navigation, and general employment at home. At the breaking out of the American war in 1776, there were exported from Scotland,

50,165 barrels of white herrings,
430 red ditto,
11,017 cwt. of dried Cod, Ling, &c.

belonging to the Thames demanded 15s. per day, which Government, having no remedy againſt theſe unreaſonable men, were obliged to allow. And, in North Britain, when any conſiderable body of troops are ſhipped for foreign ſervice, the perſons who ſupply the tranſports with proviſions and ſtores are frequently obliged to ſend to England for coopers. A circumſtance extremely hurtful to the ſucceſs of our arms, by giving the enemy advantages in point of time, which they had no reaſon to expect.

The

The herrings taken on the weſt coaſt of Scotland are chiefly exported to the Weſt-Indies, immediately from the Clyde, or by the way of Cork, at a freight of 7s. per barrel, which, as the outward-bound veſſels ſeldom have half cargoes, is all clear gain to the merchants. The white fiſh affect collaterally the trade of the Mediterranean, by furniſhing a conſiderable article in the aſſortment of the cargoes, to that part of Europe.

Now ſuppoſing that the exports were extended not only to the Weſt-Indies and the Mediterranean, but to France, the Low Countries *, Germany, Poland, Ruſſia, and the Britiſh ſettlements in the Mogul empire, and that the quantity thus exported immediately from Scotland, or by the way of Ireland,

* At preſent the Swedes and Dutch have the monopoly of the Baltic trade; but as the Swedes have no ſummer fiſhery, and the Dutch have no Winter fiſhery, there ſeems to be ſome chance of opening new markets in the north of Europe, for the ſale of Britiſh fiſh.

I have been lately informed that ſalted fiſh from Europe have quick ſales, and bring a high price at Calcutta, Madraſs, and other Britiſh ſettlements in Aſia.

and London, was equal to 400,000 barrels upon an average annually, the freights to the European, the Weſt-India, and the Aſiatic markets, would, at a medium of 7s. per barrel, produce a clear gain to the merchants of 140,000l. and give life to mercantile enterprizes, by which an additional number of ſeamen would be employed.

We are further to conſider thoſe fiſheries in their effects upon the balance of trade.

By the herring and white fiſheries in the north ſeas, the nation will receive for various kinds of fiſh exported equal to 400,000 barrels, of 32 gallons each, taking the whole at an average of 20s. per barrel 400,000

For freights as above-ſtated 140,000

£. 540,000

in ſpecie, and in goods, which we muſt otherwiſe purchaſe with caſh. All this wealth being, or which might be, drawn from the ſea

ſea which ſurrounds our iſland, affords the ſpeculative mind a pleaſure that amply repays the trouble of his calculations.

Of the value of fiſh conſumed at home, we can make no exact eſtimate; it muſt however be very conſiderable, being a great part of the food uſed by the principal body of the people in Scotland, who, without this cheap article, could ſcarcely find a ſubſiſtence in their native country.

Neither can we form any eſtimate of the value of oil that might be extracted from all the varieties of fiſh, which frequent thoſe ſeas; nor of the ſkins of ſeals, now an article of general uſe. Probably the aggregate value of the fiſh uſed at home, of oil and ſeal-ſkins, might be ſo far extended as to exceed 100,000l. which, added to the ſuppoſed value of exports before-mentioned, will realize to this iſland 640,000l.

We are next to conſider the utility of extenſive fiſheries, to the numerous claſſes of people of both ſexes, and of all ages, who would thereby gain a livelihood, excluſive of thoſe already mentioned, in the various departments of this buſineſs, as

Blackſmiths,
Joiners,
Block-makers,
Painters,
Hecklers,
Spinners,
Net-makers,
Tanners,
Rope-makers,
Sailcloth-makers,
Sail-makers,
Salt-makers,
Women and children employed in gutting the herrings; and labourers of all kinds

We may alſo obſerve that the improvement of the Highlands, by employing the natives in that line for which their local ſituation, their habits, temperance, frugality, and hardineſs, are moſt eminently adapted, is an object of very great importance to manufacturers and traders in broad cloth, ſtuffs, woollens, hardware, cutlery, and a thouſand other articles, which would find their way thither, were the people able to purchaſe them. The annual exports from England to Scotland, upon an average of 10 years, previous to the union, was only 65,345l. At the breaking out of the late war in 1775, they had amounted to nearly 2,000,000l. having increaſed thirty fold in leſs than 70 years: which exports were chiefly, if not wholly

wholly to the Lowlands, a country containing ſomething more than two-thirds of the national population.

Here, therefore, is a data whereon to ground our eſtimation of exports to the Highlands, were the population increaſed, and the circumſtances of the people mended by a well regulated, and well ſupported fiſhery, accommodated with ſmall towns, where the people might be ſupplied with proviſions, ſtores, and all the neceſſary materials for that branch in all its departments of fiſhing, curing, reddening, and the extracting of oil.

Finally, the arguments in favour of this branch will be found unanſwerable, when it is conſidered, that, what Government gives in bounties to the fiſheries, with one hand, they receive in duties from thoſe fiſheries with the other hand; and if we can believe the eſtimates of revenue drawn up by the fiſhers, ariſing from building materials, repairs, hemp, nets, ſtaves, rum, and other ſpirits, ſugar, &c. the balance will be found to be conſiderably in favour of the public: if ſo, the fiſheries, inſtead of being a drain, are a ſource

of revenue, proportioned to the extent to which they are carried. But, ſuppoſing that the expenditures by Government in bounties, and its receipts in duties, ſhould only balance each other; in that caſe, the produce of a ſmall tax upon dogs, to be appropriated to the fiſheries, would ultimately flow into, and become a part of, the general revenue.

We have further to remark, that a fund of 200,000l. annually, propoſed to be raiſed by this tax, would be more than ſufficient for the purpoſes of the northern fiſheries for ſome years to come, owing to the backwardneſs of the Eaſt-country people, who, being employed in other branches, and in ſmuggling, have allowed the fiſheries to fall into the hands of the Swedes, Iriſh, and Weſt-country Scotſmen. The overplus might therefore be applied towards the opening two ſhort communications to the Hebrides, and the eſtabliſhing of fiſhing ſtations for the conveniency of a people, who are ſtrongly diſpoſed to proſecute that buſineſs with the utmoſt perſeverance, and who would ſoon repay the public, by various channels, in a ten-fold degree.

Such

Such indulgencies would be received with overflowings of gratitude. A general gladneſs would be diffuſed through every coaſt, glen, and iſland: thouſands, who had dragged through an exiſtence of unprofitable toil and drudgery, would wiſh for the renewal of life, to enjoy the luxury of a glaſs window, a chair, a chimney, a morſel of butcher's meat.

They would reckon their poſterity and their kindred happy in having the proſpect of being readily ſupplied, for money, with fiſhing hooks, lines, nets, ſalt, oatmeal; and in having the means of providing for their families, by honeſt labour, both on land and water. Theſe are the humble requiſitions of men, whoſe intrepidity in war, and inoffenſive demeanour in time of peace, do honour to human nature; and it may be preſumed, that a very ſmall degree of public attention to thoſe people, and the fiſheries around their ſhores, would diſconcert the councils of our rivals and opponents, more than the loſs of their whole navy. A hundred ſail of the line could be replaced in a few years; *but it never will be in the power of France, to bring forward a new maritime force, equal to that which may be drawn from the Highlands of Scotland.*

POSTSCRIPT.

Dunbar, April 28, 1785.

I Beg therefore you will be ſo good as to urge, in the ſtrongeſt manner, the neceſſity of giving a bounty to the boat fiſhing, being the beſt adapted to this ſide of the country.

Rothſay, March 19, 1786.

I am perfectly ſatisfied that you are going upon proper grounds, and that, if your propoſals are agreed to, the good effects will ſoon appear. If the bounty be aboliſhed, the conſequence muſt inevitably be ruinous to all concerned; the property of the adventurers will be entirely annihilated, as there can be no uſe for the veſſels; and the whole country will be laid deſolate and waſte. It may be ſaid by ſome perſons, that many buſſes will hurt the revenue, by taking ſuch ſums for bounties; but I affirm the contrary: the more buſſes, the more gain to the revenue; becauſe

becauſe the herrings are paid for by returns of foreign produce; and the herrings of one buſs will pay the bounty of three, by duties on ſuch produce.

If any perſon is againſt the importation of rock ſalt, he muſt be completely ignorant, becauſe there can be no good ſalt without rock ſalt; and if that was got, we would need no foreign ſalt, as at preſent is the caſe. I intreat you will read the obſervations*; and do in all things as appears beſt to yourſelf.

Greenock, Feb. 16, 1786.

I am ſorry to find there is any oppoſition to the ſyſtem of the fiſheries you have ſo ſtrongly and ſo juſtly recommended. Should the aid of Government be withdrawn from the adventurers in the fiſheries, this uſeful branch of buſineſs will come to an end; for whatever ſpeculative men may aſſert, there is no doubt if bounties are not continued, we muſt give it up.

* A memorial, from which ſome extracts are printed, in the third report of the committee of the Houſe of Commons on the Britiſh fiſheries. July, 1785.

Port Glaſgow, March 10, 27; *April* 10, 1786.

Should the bounty be taken off, there is an end to our herring fiſhery.

I have ſent you two cockets, and accounts of the duty on barrels and ſalt, paid by our veſſels for the privilege of fiſhing upon the Iriſh coaſt. Over and above theſe accounts, the Admiral charges one guinea for regiſtrating the buſs, and 5s. for every boat the buſs has in the fiſhing. You will obſerve that the duty is upon the entry barrel, as well as the ſalt.

Duty on 251 barrels, - - -	2	16	1
663 barrels ſalt, - -	11	1	0
Cuſtom-houſe fees, - - - -	1	10	0
Surveyor's fees, - - - - -	1	2	9
Admiral's ditto - - - - -	1	11	0
Ditto for 3 boats - - - - -	0	15	0
£.	18	15	10

In regard to the number of buſſes or veſſels that was employed in fiſhing and buying herrings on the Iriſh coaſt this ſeaſon, they are not over-rated at 500. The fiſhing boats are under-rated at 2000. Certainly the quantity of herrings that went to England, Wales, Scotland,

Scotland, the Iſle of Man, and the Weſt Indies, was far above 150,000 barrels, beſides what the Iriſh uſed at home. I have this account from judicious maſters of veſſels, who were upon the fiſhing ground this preſent year 1786.

I think it would be proper to have a clauſe in the bill, obliging the owners of buſſes to have one third of their ſalt Britiſh or Iriſh made ſalt. My reaſon for this is, that, in the month of June, July, and Auguſt, the foreign or great ſalt is ſo long in diſſolving, that the fiſh is hurt before the pickle is made in ſuch a quantity as to preſerve the whole of the fiſh in the barrel; whereas the ſmall ſalt of our own making goes inſtantly into pickle, and being intermixed with the foreign, the whole will diſſolve much ſooner, and tend to the preſervation of the fiſh.

You always expreſſed ſuch an eagerneſs to have a trial made by ſome Scottiſh veſſels upon the Shetland coaſt, and ſignified that ſome extra encouragement would likely be given to the adventurers, as the expence and riſk would be very great, above what the preſent law requires. This, with the deference

I paid to Mr. Knox's judgment, induced me to build two veſſels for that very purpoſe, and one I had before, in all three, becauſe I think that one veſſel is no trial. My new veſſels are built upon the Dutch conſtruction, deep waiſted, with a drift maſt upon the taffle, ſuch as the Dutch have, and a net rope of 120 fathoms long, and 7 inches and a half thick, which will coſt a great deal of money before the veſſels ſail.

I beg of you to lay this before the committee in a preſſing manner, and that the veſſels may be inſpected by the Chamber of Commerce at Glaſgow, or any perſons whom the committee ſhall pleaſe to appoint.

By a letter from Shetland, inſerted in *the View of the Britiſh Empire*, page 272, it appears, that the expence of a veſſel properly built and equipped for the fiſhery on that coaſt will amount to 1000l. and it is on account of this heavy expence, that the moſt valuable of all the Britiſh fiſheries hath been transferred, from the natives of theſe kingdoms, to Dutch, and other foreigners, who frequent the north ſeas regularly every year.

To

To enable our own people to revive, or rather to commence this fiſhery, an extra tonnage bounty will be required from Government: ſuch encouragement is particularly neceſſary to veſſels fitted out from the Clyde, on account of the great length, delays, and hazards of that voyage.

Beſides the benefits to the Navy and to the community, from an extenſive and permanent Shetland fiſhery, the Scottiſh ſeamen, who have been hitherto accuſtomed to a ſedentary fiſhery while the veſſels lie at anchor, will alſo practiſe the open ſea fiſhery, during the ſummer and harveſt months, by following the ſhoals, in the manner of the Dutch.

I hope that the gentlemen of the committee, who have devoted much time and attention to the buſineſs of the fiſheries in general, are now ſenſible that the Britiſh herring and white fiſheries are the moſt important to this country, and that the officious miſrepreſentations of commiſſioners of the cuſtoms in both kingdoms, reſpecting bounties, have a direct tendency to annihilate all the Britiſh fiſheries, and conſequently to ruin the adventurers, to throw thouſands of working peo-

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ple upon the public for ſupport, to weaken the navy, and to endanger the general commerce of the nation.

So far from coinciding with theſe revenue officers, it may be honeſtly declared, that the word *Oeconomy* ought never to be joined in the ſame ſentence with *Britiſh Fiſheries*. Where is the oeconomy of ſaving one million at the expence of 80 or 100,000 millions?

When we conſider that all the ſtatements, and the ſpeculations of miniſters, on finance, reſt ſolely on the chance of a long period of peace, and that the value of ſuch immenſe property, beſides the ſafety of our diſtant ſettlements, depends on the tranquillity of Europe, to which an increaſed Britiſh naval force will greatly contribute, the trifle expended in bounties, were it purely to avert the evils which ariſe from every war, would be judiciouſly and humanely beſtowed. The arm of power, and that only, will have the deſired effect, reſpecting foreign ſtates; who, as ſoon as they ſhall perceive the rapid increaſe of Britiſh ſeamen, and the gradual, but ſure decreaſe of her burdens, will be better diſpoſed to give peace to mankind.

FINIS

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE EXPEDIENCY OF ESTABLISHING

FISHING STATIONS,

OR

SMALL TOWNS,

IN THE

HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

AND THE

HEBRIDE ISLANDS.

THE attention of all well regulated ſtates hath generally been directed to ſuch objects of national utility, as contributed to aſſiſt nature, and to employ the great body of the people.

The courſes of rivers have been directed into new channels; internal navigations, of conſiderable length and dimenſions, have been opened from ſea to ſea, through ſeemingly inſurmountable difficulties: even the ocean itſelf hath been bounded; and, in many parts, the face of nature hath undergone a total change.

Immenſe tracts of deſert land have been brought into cultivation; and regions, which ſerved only to give ſhelter to the wild animals, became, through the perſevering hand of man, the ſeats of populous cities, of ſcience, and refinement.

Theſe great efforts of human induſtry were rightly conſidered as the ground-work of manufactures, of commerce, and whatever contributed to the general welfare of communities, and to the ſtrength of nations. Of this, the annals of ancient, as well as of modern times abound in examples. The works of antiquity were, however, effected by potent empires, in the meridian of their glory; but thoſe of latter times, and ſome of them within the memory of man, have been generally undertaken and carried on by nations juſt emerging from obſcurity, as Ruſſia and Ireland, whoſe ſudden tranſition, from a ſtate of rude nature to that ſtation which renders them

reſpectable in the eyes of mankind, hath been the reſult of unremitting application, both in the legiſlature and individuals, as well as of liberal aids from the public revenue, without which, no objects of great national concern can effectually be executed.

It would ſeem alſo, by the exertions and the liberal grants of other European ſtates, as France, Auſtria, and Pruſſia, that a ſpirit of internal improvement hath, within the preſent century, wiſely pervaded the greateſt part of Europe, while the eſſential intereſts of this kingdom have been, in a great meaſure, ſacrificed to deluſive ſchemes of commercial monopoly, at the diſtance of three thouſand miles from the centre.

Immediately after the Reſtoration, when peace and good humour were reſtored to this kingdom, the active genius of the people led them to colonization in the wilds of North America, upon the idea of raiſing new cuſtomers for their manufactures and merchandize, while a third part of their native and very improvable country remained in a ſtate of nature.

This was particularly the condition of the Northern part of the iſland: the Lowlands exhibited almoſt one general ruin, owing to the civil and religious commotions which had diſtracted that unhappy country, from the death of James V. in 1542 to the Reſtoration in 1660, and which did not finally ſubſide till the Revolution in 1688.

During theſe diſtreſsful ages, and almoſt down to the preſent day, the more remote diſtricts of Scotland, called the Highlands, remained exactly in the ſtate in which nature had formed them; a *terra incognita*, deemed unworthy of notice, and incapable of being rendered uſeful to Government, or to the Public.

Such was the half-improved ſtate of theſe kingdoms, when it was reſolved to extend the lines of empire, by including an immenſe continent, lying on the oppoſite ſide of the Atlantic, by which it was affirmed, that England would derive not only great wealth, but alſo a greater degree of ſtrength and national importance.

In ſupport of this new ſyſtem, the coloniſts were permitted to ſupply the mother country with ſhipping, and to become in a certain degree its carriers. All American-built ſhips were to be admitted into our ports, with all the privileges of Britiſh: but the Britiſh ſhips, when they arrived in America, were burdened with tonnage duties and other expences, from which the colony-built veſſels were exempted. The ſame partiality extended to American ſeamen, who, in all the ſubſequent wars, were not liable to be preſſed into the naval ſervice, which, conſequently, threw the whole burden of that ſervice upon the merchants and mariners of the mother country.

This ſyſtem of colonization, begun and carried on at the expence of Great Britain, was warmly, but ineffectually, oppoſed by ſome able politicians of the laſt century; particularly by Sir Joſiah Child and Doctor Davenant, whoſe predictions have been too completely fulfilled, with the additional mortifying circumſtance, which they could not have imagined, that our new cuſtomers

have

have coſt this country above one hundred and fifty millions, in ſupporting their civil eſtabliſhments; in bounties on the American produce; in defending the colonies againſt the Indian depredations, and the incroachments of the French; and, finally, in an unſucceſsful ſtruggle to retain their allegiance.

The effects of this expenditure have reached all deſcriptions of men, and afforded ample matter for political declamation, both in Parliament, and out of it.

Let us colonize in America, by which we ſhall be enriched, was the language of the laſt century. Let us abandon that diſtant country, by which we have been impoveriſhed, is the language of the preſent day. Let us look at home, improve and ſtrengthen the centre, is, happily, the favorite topic of mankind, of whatever deſcription or party, from one end of the iſland to the other.

While this patriotic ſpirit predominates in the nation, and while Government are ſtrongly diſpoſed to co-operate with the wiſhes of the people, there is reaſon to hope, that our envied iſland will ultimately profit by its misfortunes, and riſe with additional ſplendour from its apparent ruins.

When all the hitherto neglected ſources of agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and fiſheries, ſhall be brought forward, and when every pound expended on theſe great objects ſhall annually, and for a perpetuity, realize many pounds, enthuſiaſm itſelf falls ſhort in its ſpeculative eſtimates of the height to which Great Britain may yet arrive.

In contemplating theſe ſubjects, it naturally occurs, that the objects which contribute moſt effectually to the ſtrength of the navy, ſhould take the lead in the arrangements of future operations. The ſtrength of the Navy depends chiefly on the extent of our maritime coaſt; the number of people who inhabit that coaſt; and the nature of the buſineſs on which they are moſt generally employed. It is owing to the happy ſituation of Great Britain in theſe reſpects, that we have been able to fit out ſuch mighty armaments, and to carry on an almoſt unequalled commerce over a great part of the habitable world. By theſe, the Britiſh name is known and reſpected amongſt the ſavage, as well as the civilized nations. But, as the force which may hereafter be brought againſt us, by a confederacy of naval powers, may far exceed the uſual magnitude of our armaments, it ſeems indiſpenſably neceſſary to take a ſurvey of our native coaſts, and to bring forward a proportionable increaſe of ſtrength from parts, which, during the rage for territory in the weſtern hemiſphere, were totally overlooked.

The coaſt of Great Britain comprehends nearly two thouſand miles, of which about four hundred miles, in the northern part, are not furniſhed with a town, harbour, or place, where a ſhip in diſtreſs can be ſupplied with an anchor, cable, or ſail. From the want of theſe materials, and of perſons to repair the damages occaſioned by ſtreſs of weather, or other cauſes, many valuable lives, as well as veſſels and cargoes, are loſt to theſe kingdoms. From a coaſt ſo ill provided in whatever relates to navigation, the royal navy cannot be furniſhed with the neceſſary ſupplies of

ſeamen and carpenters, when called for by the emergencies of the ſtate.

To this great line of coaſt on the main-land of the Highlands, is to be added the circumference of the principal Hebride Iſlands, making ſix hundred miles; the whole, one thouſand miles, on which there is only the ſmall town of Stornoway, in the Hebrides; and the inconſiderable places called Thurſo, Wick, and Dornoch, on the eaſt ſide of the main-land, being only one town, or rather village, to every two hundred and fifty miles.

The number of people throughout the whole coaſt, including the iſles, may amount to two hundred thouſand, or two hundred for each mile; beſides one hundred thouſand inhabiting the glens and interior parts of the main-land, who, were the coaſts in a flouriſhing ſtate, would reſort thither in great numbers annually, inſtead of emigrating with their wives and children to diſtant regions, from whence few ever return: and the nation thereby ſuſtains a conſtant drain of perſons, who, from their bravery in war, their hardineſs, agility, temperance, ſimplicity of manners, and domeſtic qualities, it would be highly expedient to retain on their native ſoil.*

Nature hath pointed out, in ſtriking characters, the means whereby that coaſt might be rendered ſubſervient to the great purpoſes of the navy, as the primary object; beſides the advantages that would ariſe to manufactures and commerce, from the eſtabliſhment of a thriving, populous colony in theſe extreme parts of our iſland.

The generality of people who inhabit theſe ſhores have a ſtrong propenſity to a ſea life, particularly to fiſheries; and no country, in the known world, is better ſituated for extending that branch on every ſide, and at all ſeaſons of the year. It is an eſtabliſhed fact, that the Northern Ocean is the grand receptacle of fiſh in endleſs varieties, and in ſuch numbers as to exceed the powers of imagination to conceive. Some of the leſſer ſpecies multiply by thouſands, as the herring; others by millions, as the cod-fiſh†. Of theſe, and other fiſhes, as ling, tuſk, haddock, the coaſts of Scotland, and more eſpecially of the Highlands, have a double ſupply: firſt, the home or native fiſh, which propagate on the coaſt through the whole year;

* *Extract of a Letter from the Highlands, March*, 1786.

Mr. ———— has been at Greenock, to engage a tranſport to carry the Knoidart people to Canada: there are already, at leaſt, three hundred paſſengers engaged, and it is thought that there will be many more. The veſſel is to be at the iſle of Oranſy the beginning of June; I am therefore afraid, that the ſcheme of villages will take place too late, as the people will be all away; many among them are expert fiſhers. Theſe, when once they ſettle in Canada, will encourage others, as they are now encouraged by ſome friends before them; this will form a chain of emigration: it is thought the country will be converted into a ſheep walk. Should this grow general, and our gallant Highlanders deſert us, I fear all the ſheep that can be introduced and reared will form, in their ſtead, but a ſorry defence againſt our enemies.

By another account, communicated to a Member of Parliament, two ſhips are to be in readineſs againſt the fifth of June, to take on board ſix hundred people, at £.4 each, for their paſſage to Quebec.

† Philoſophical Tranſactions.

and

and, ſecondly, the great annual migrations from the northern latitudes within the Artic Circle, which, after paying the Britiſh kingdoms a temporary viſit, are again loſt in the immenſity of the ocean.

The fiſheries carried on at preſent by the northern inhabitants conſiſt of the home fiſhery immediately upon their ſhores, and in the lakes and bays by which theſe ſhores are every where indented, from one to twenty miles within land. The varieties moſt uſually caught on theſe ſhores are herrings, white-fiſh, flat-fiſh, mackarel, dog-fiſh, and ſeals. Shell-fiſh alſo abounds, but is much neglected, excepting lobſters for the London market; oyſters, which are chiefly burnt unopened for manure to the land; and leſſer fiſh, which are ſold to the inhabitants of the before-mentioned towns at an incredible low price.

Secondly, there is a diſtant fiſhery for herring, cod, ling, and tuſk, around the Shetland Iſlands on the north-eaſt, and the great Iſland of Iceland on the north-weſt; both of which ſtations are regularly frequented by many veſſels from the maritime kingdoms of Europe; while the ſhare which the Scots have in this diſtant fiſhery is little more than a name; nor have they been able to carry on even the home fiſhery to any conſiderable extent, comparatively to what that fiſhery admits of. Still leſs is the ſhare that hath fallen to the lot of the poor native Highlanders, on whoſe immediate ſhores, perſons from diſtant parts make their annual captures. Whereas, by improving theſe fiſheries, and by a continued ſucceſſion of fiſhing and ſailing, theſe northern ſhores would be ready at all times to furniſh a very powerful ſupply of excellent ſeamen; but, in the preſent ſtate of the country, no effectual exertions can be made, even in that fiſhery which its lakes and bays afford. Here is a conſiderable body of people without capital, and a coaſt without towns where the natives can be ſupplied with nets, caſks, ſalt, hooks, lines, and proviſions.—Here are no places where fiſhers, women and children, from diſtant parts, can be accommodated with lodgings, either while in health or in ſickneſs. The inhabitants of theſe ſhores have but ſcanty dwellings to themſelves, and are equally ill provided in neceſſaries for the accommodation of perſons who would flock thither in the fiſhing ſeaſons.

This deplorable ſtate of the Highlands having been lately repreſented in ſtrong colours to the feelings and ſerious attention of the public, and the increaſe of ſeamen being alſo an object of great national importance, the legiſlature have already entered upon the ſubject of promoting the northern fiſheries, and of removing ſeveral impediments, which have hitherto retarded their progreſs. Other objects of a ſimilar nature are now in contemplation.-----But no laws, however judicious, no regulations, however expedient, can extend and ſecure a permanent fiſhery and nurſery of ſeamen upon theſe ſhores, unleſs the public ſhall, at the ſame time, accommodate the natives, and thoſe who may be diſpoſed to come amongſt them, with habitations and lodgings, upon or near the moſt frequented fiſhing grounds, and where theſe perſons may be furniſhed with the neceſſaries of life, and all the materials for boat building, fiſhing, packing, and curing.

This implies the eſtabliſhing of FISHING STATIONS, or ſmall FREE TOWNS, in the moſt eligible ſituations, both on the main-land, and on the Hebride Iſlands, which front the extenſive line of weſtern coaſt at greater or leſs diſtances, and where the ſhoals of herrings paſs, in their annual migrations to the ſouth, filling ſometimes one lake, ſometimes another; which fiſhery, were the natives better accommodated, would prove a ſource of great national wealth; employ thouſands of indigent people of both ſexes; and bring forward into the line of active, uſeful induſtry, a country that compoſes a fifth part of Great Britain.

With a view to theſe important objects, as well as to the nurſery of ſeamen, it was propoſed that the public ſhould erect, by way of experiment, ſome ſtations on the weſt coaſt of the main-land, each ſtation or town to be compoſed of fifteen or twenty ſmall houſes; beſides ſome public works neceſſary for ſhipping and fiſheries. But the ſtate of the national finances, and the uncertainty of the ſources neceſſary for the exigencies of Government, did not at that time afford much reaſon to expect immediate aſſiſtance, and theſe diſtreſſed countries of the Highlands have conſequently remained in *ſtatu quo*.

In this dilemma, ſome gentlemen, who are members of the Houſe of Commons, have ſuggeſted the idea of raiſing a fund by means of a general ſubſcription; and, as all degrees of people in Great Britain will be more or leſs benefited by this maritime colony within our own iſland, it may be preſumed, that gentlemen of affluence and public ſpirit will come forward upon this occaſion, and merit the appellation of----THE FRIENDS OF THEIR COUNTRY.

By thus planting a coaſt of one thouſand miles with hardy, intrepid ſeamen, the hoſtile deſigns of our enemies will be fruſtrated; their formidable armaments, inſtead of annoying our commerce and diſtant ſettlements, will be permitted to remain in their dock-yards probably for many years: during which ſeaſon of peace and ſecurity, commerce and manufactures will flouriſh; Adminiſtration will be enabled to put the public burdens into a train of redemption, and have leiſure to proſecute ſuch meaſures of national policy as may, from time to time, be found expedient.

To theſe negative advantages, which will in a great meaſure flow from this new eſtabliſhment, may be added the ſaving of ſeventy, eighty, or one hundred millions, the uſual expenditures upon every ſeven years war; compared to which, the expence of the propoſed towns will be mere fractions.----Every war entails upon the ſubject a long train of heavy taxes; but the meaſure now propoſed requires only a trifle, for a time, from thoſe who are able to advance it; and which, inſtead of taxes, will raiſe thouſands of new cuſtomers for manufactures of broad-cloth, woollens, hardware, cutlery, and an endleſs aſſortment of leſſer articles, for which England is famed.

Sir Charles Whitworth's Commercial Tables ſtate, as before mentioned in page 139, the annual exports from England to Scotland, previouſly to the Union of the two Kingdoms, in 1707, at 65,345l. At preſent there are good grounds for ſuppoſing they have

have increaſed thirty-fold in value, being nearly 2,000,000l. Were the northern fiſheries improved, and the people fully employed, the exports to that diviſion of the kingdom would increaſe proportionably.

Theſe are the grounds on which we entertain a hope, that the members of the Highland Societies of London and Edinburgh, and other noblemen and gentlemen, will ſubſcribe to this plan, and thereby enable a ſufficient number of gentlemen of rank and fortune to enter, as truſtees or directors, upon the buſineſs of treating with the proprietors of lands, and with workmen, for erecting certain ſmall plain buildings, by contract.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MARITIME PARTS OF THE HIGHLANDS, AND OF THE HEBRIDE ISLANDS.

THE Highlands conſiſt of two principal diviſions:
First, the northern part of Scotland; and,
Secondly, the Hebride Iſlands.

The coaſt of the main-land ſtretches on the weſt ſide, from the head-land called the Mull of Cantire, facing Ireland on the ſouth, to Cape Wrath, facing the great Northern Ocean.

The Mull of Cantire lies in North lat. 55, 23; and Cape Wrath in 58, 28; by other maps, in 58, 44: the whole forming a coaſt of two hundred and thirty-four Engliſh miles, in a ſtraight line: but, were the windings of the head-lands included, the line would extend to three hundred miles. This is called the Weſt Coaſt of the Highlands, and is waſhed by the Atlantic, between which coaſt and North America there is no land, excepting the Hebride Iſlands.

After paſſing round Cape Wrath, we enter upon the Northern extremity of Great Britain, which lies nearly in a ſtraight line from Cape Wrath on the Weſt, to Dungſbay-Head on the Eaſt, and forms a coaſt of ſeventy miles, uſually called the Pentland Firth. There is no land between this coaſt and Greenland, excepting the Orkney Iſlands,

At the diſtance of	6	miles
The Shetland Iſlands,	100	ditto
The Ferro Iſlands,	150	ditto
And Iceland,	400	ditto

The two firſt belong to Great Britain; the two laſt to the Crown of Denmark.

Leaving Dungſbay-Head, we enter upon the eaſt coaſt of the Highlands, which ſtretches ninety miles due ſouth, to Inverneſs, at the head of the Murray Firth. But, as the moſt ſouthern part of this diſtrict is accommodated with towns and materials for fiſheries, we ſhall limit the eſtimate to that part of the coaſt which lies between Dungſbay-Head and the ſmall ruinous town of Dornoch, containing a line of ſeventy miles. This coaſt is waſhed by the German Sea, and faces the ſouth part of Norway, from which it is diſtant three hundred miles.

The total number of miles between the Mull of Cantire and the Firth of Dornoch, excluſively of head-lands, bays, and lakes, is as follows: viz.

The Weſt coaſt, between the Mull of Cantire and Cape Wrath,	234
The North coaſt, between Cape Wrath and Dungſbay-Head	70
The Eaſt coaſt, between Dungſbay-Head and the Firth of Dornoch,	70
	374
For the ſake of even numbers we ſhall add, on account of head-lands, only	26
Almoſt townleſs coaſt, on the main land	400

We now come to the ſecond diviſion of the Highlands, which is compoſed entirely of iſlands, called the Hebrides, amounting to about three hundred; of which forty are inhabited. It would be difficult to aſcertain the circumference of this numerous cluſter of iſlands, or even of all thoſe that are inhabited. We ſhall therefore only ſtate the dimenſions of the moſt conſiderable, from which may be formed an imperfect conjecture of the aggregate line of the whole.

1. The *Long Iſland* forms a chain of nearly one hundred and forty miles in length, and, in general, from ſix to ten miles in width: in one place it is twenty-five miles acroſs.

This chain is principally compoſed of five iſlands, lying ſouth and north, and ſeparated from each other, at high-water, by four narrow channels, through which fiſhing-veſſels may paſs from eaſt to weſt, between the inner channel and the main ocean.

2. *Sky* is fifty-four miles in length, and fifteen in width, at a medium.

3. *Mull* is twenty miles in length, and fifteen in width, at a medium.

4. *Ilay* is about half the dimenſions of Mull.

5. *Jura* is nearly the ſize of the former.

6. *Tirey* and *Coll*, ſeparated from each other by a narrow channel, are about twenty miles in length, and three, at a medium, in width.

Before I cloſe the deſcription of this weſtern coaſt, it may be proper to remark, that the country on the weſt ſide of the Firth of Clyde, a channel of forty miles in length, and nearly the ſame in width, is entirely Highland; abounding, like that country, in iſlands, lakes, bays, and fiſheries; and which may be conſidered as a continuation of the Hebrides, being only ſeparated from theſe iſlands by the narrow peninſula of Cantire.

Of the iſlands within the Firth of Clyde, that called Arran is the principal. It contains ſeven thouſand inhabitants, is ſixteen miles in length, by nine in width, and hath three excellent bays, of which Lamlaſh is the moſt conſiderable, where ſhipping ride ſecurely in all kinds of weather.

From this iſland (which lies thirty miles within the Mull of Cantire, and is entirely townleſs) to the Firth of Dornoch, the attention of the public may be directed, including a coaſt,

On

	Miles.		People.
On the main-land, of more than	400	Inhabited by	150,000
And on the Hebride Iſles	600		50,000
	1000		200,000

NUMBER OF TOWNS WHICH IT MAY BE EXPEDIENT TO ERECT ON THE ABOVE-MENTIONED SHORES: PLAN OF THOSE TOWNS, AND THE EXPENCE OF THE HOUSES.

BETWEEN the north point of Arran and the Firth of Dornoch, there are, upon the coaſt of the main-land and the iſlands, above two hundred lakes, bays, and openings, all of which are fiſhing grounds, and where ſhips may ſafely ride.

To put theſe extenſive and valuable ſhores in a ſituation for proſecuting the fiſheries effectually, and at all ſeaſons of the year, FORTY fiſhing ſtations, or ſmall towns, will be neceſſary, *in the firſt inſtance*; being only one ſtation for every twenty-five miles, on a coaſt of one thouſand miles, and for every five thouſand people, who reſide on that coaſt, beſides thoſe who inhabit the interior country, the younger part of whom would ſoon become regular fiſhers.

For facilitating the growth of towns, accommodating the great body of the people with materials for the fiſheries, and inſtructing others in the mechanical arts, a houſe will be required for each of the following profeſſions, viz.—A boat-builder, cooper, net-maker, tanner, blackſmith, maſon, houſe-carpenter, weaver, taylor, ſhoemaker, butcher, and tallow-chandler.

Alſo for a general dealer in meal, grain, fiſhing materials and ſtores, ſalt, timber, ſtaves, hoops, pitch, tar, oil, and a great variety of other articles, which the fiſhers and the country people have at preſent no means of procuring, upon eaſy terms, or when immediately wanted.

A public houſe, or ſmall inn, accommodated with beds for the conveniency of ſtrangers, who may come thither to buy and ſell, will be particularly neceſſary; and we hope, likewiſe, that a houſe will be deemed requiſite for a ſchool-maſter, and for an apothecary or ſurgeon.

The whole number will compriſe ſixteen houſes, which, excepting thoſe for the trader and inn-keeper, may be built upon one ſcale or plan of architecture, with ſtone, lime, and ſlate; each houſe having two apartments on the ground, with ſtone-flooring; and two apartments above. The houſes for the trader and inn-keeper ſhould be more capacious, and accommodated with back-rooms for holding bulky articles. But, upon the whole, theſe ſixteen buildings may be raiſed, in a country where materials (timber excepted) are plentiful, and where wages are low, at 80l. each, or 1,280l. for the whole.

As all the lakes and bays of the Highlands are more or leſs the receptacles of white fiſh, ſhell-fiſh, ſalmon, mackarel, and occaſionally viſited by the migrating ſhoals of herrings, there ought to be a number of ſtationary, practical fiſhers in each town, at their firſt eſtabliſhment, for whoſe accommodation twenty ſmall houſes ſhould be built, with two apartments on the ground, at about 25l. each: in all 500l.

GENERAL ACCOUNT, VIZ.

Sixteen dwelling-houſes to each town	£80	1280
Twenty do. do.	25	500
A public well, paving, and other incidental expences		220
Expenditure on each town of 36 houſes		2000
Number of towns		40
Total expence for building 40 towns, containing 640 houſes, at 80l. each; and 800 do. at 25l. in all 1440 houſes	£80,000	

The above is the ſum which it will be neceſſary to raiſe by individual ſubſcription, not upon ſpeculative ideas of a plan of emolument to thoſe who advance the money, but merely to build a number of commodious dwellings on the beſt fiſhing grounds, for a people, who, though they cannot immediately erect houſes at their own expence, may, with a moderate degree of ſucceſs in their reſpective profeſſions, be able, in a few years, to pay a ſmall yearly rent, by which the ſubſcribers may receive from three to four per cent. upon an average of years, till the houſes ſhall be ſold, and the principal repaid.

In a country which does not raiſe the neceſſary ſupplies of grain for its inhabitants, who frequently experience a temporary ſcarcity, it would be expedient to accommodate each houſe, having four apartments, with an acre of land adjoining to the ſame; and the ſmall houſes with half an acre each, whereon to raiſe vegetables and potatoes; which, with fiſh at their doors, would form a principal part of their ſubſiſtence through the whole year.

In treating with the reſpective proprietors of the ſoil, it would be neceſſary to look forward to the growth of the towns, and to procure, at once, ſufficient ground not only for the ſite of houſes, but alſo for a ſmall garden to each houſe that ſhall be erected by individuals during the infancy of each townſhip.

The progreſs of theſe towns will depend greatly on the liberality of the preſent ground proprietors; who, if they co-operate with the good diſpoſitions of Government and the public, if they wiſh to improve their eſtates, to have their rents well paid, and to ſee their country flouriſh, will readily treat with the directors for a piece of ground, not under fifty Scots acres for each townſhip, to become from thence forward the unalienable royalty of ſuch towns, ſubject only to the prince on the throne, the laws of their country, and the regulations of their own magiſtracy.

The growth of theſe towns will alſo depend much on the aid that Government ſhall give towards the building of cuſtom-houſes, quays, and other works, which fall properly on the public at large. The concurrence of Government in this reſpect will operate as the main-ſpring of the whole buſineſs, It will diſpoſe the proprietors of lands to treat for the alienation of the ſame on the moſt liberal terms; it will facilitate the ſubſcription for erecting the private dwellings; and finally, it will draw to theſe places a concourſe of people, traffic, and ſhipping.

From theſe outlines of the plan it appears, that the mutual concurrence, and hearty ſupport of the ſeveral deſcriptions of men before-mentioned are abſolutely neceſſary in laying the foundation of towns, which may, one day, prove as walls of braſs for the defence of this highly favoured and juſtly celebrated iſland.

A PLAN FOR COMPLETING THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO SEAS OF SCOTLAND, BY A SUBSCRIPTION.

TO open a free navigation between theſe ſeas, there remain to be cut

	miles	
Of the great canal, - - - - - -	9	15
And the ſhort cut, at Loch Crinan, nearly - -	6	

As this great line of communication, extending 125 miles from ſea to ſea, cannot be completed until a fund ſhall be raiſed for cutting the laſt-mentioned 6 miles, and as it is univerſally admitted, that the improvement of the Highlands and the fiſheries will depend greatly on the ſame; I humbly beg leave to introduce this buſineſs to the immediate conſideration of the Highland Societies of London and Edinburgh, and the public at large.

Mr. Watts the ſurveyor ſtates the expence of a canal of 10 feet water, at 48,405l.; but, as the large buſſes, being ſharp bottomed, draw 11 feet, I propoſed to the Committee of the Houſe of Commons on the fiſheries, that the ſame be extended to 12 feet; and it may be ſuppoſed, that the whole expence upon this ſcale will amount to 60,000l.

As the navigation on this canal will conſiſt chiefly of buſſes and Highland boats, the tonnage duties cannot, with any degree of propriety, be ſtated at more than 500l. per annum; from which muſt be deducted about 40l. for collecting, and a conſiderable ſum annually for keeping the canal and locks in repair. If heavy duties were levied, the veſſels, and even the ſmall boats would take the old courſe by the Mull of Cantire, though at the riſk of their lives, and the purpoſes of the canal would be thereby in a great meaſure defeated.

This being a juſt repreſentation of the caſe, the money cannot be raiſed on the proſpect of an annual per centage, at leaſt for ſome years; but by a voluntary gift from Government, from chartered and other towns, and from individuals, all of whom will derive eſſential benefits from the undertaking. Were the nobility, gentry, and ſeaport towns in Scotland, diſpoſed to engage for two thirds of the expence, it is poſſible that Government would advance the remaining third. At any rate, it would be proper to know their ſentiments on that head as ſoon as poſſible.

Sketch of the plan for raiſing the money.

Government to advance - - -	20,000	£. 60,000
The cities and towns upon the Clyde and the Forth,	5,000	
Noblemen, gentlemen, &c. - - -	35,000	

Suppoſing that 350 individuals were to ſubſcribe 100l. each, the ſubſcription would be immediately filled on their part; but, as it may be difficult to perſuade ſo great a number of perſons to ſubſcribe 100l. each, it might be left to the option of every perſon to ſubſcribe any ſum not under —— pounds.

Thus, by including a greater body of people, the ſubſcription would become eaſy to perſons of every deſcription; and it may be preſumed that, upon this plan, the ſubſcription would ſoon be filled.

As the canal will require three years from the preſent time, before it can be completed, the money might be paid in by three inſtalments; the firſt on the day of ſubſcribing; the ſecond on that day twelve-months; and the third, on that day two years.

For a full account of this propoſed canal, ſee View of the Britiſh Empire, Vol. II. p. 410.

THIRD REPORT

FROM THE COMMITTEE

APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO THE STATE OF THE

BRITISH FISHERIES,

AND INTO THE MOST EFFECTUAL MEANS FOR THEIR ENCOURAGEMENT AND EXTENSION.

(4th May 1786.)

The COMMITTEE appointed to enquire into the State of the *Britiſh* Fiſheries, and into the moſt effectual Means for their Encouragement and Extenſion, and to report the ſame, from Time to Time, with their Opinion thereupon, to the Houſe,

HAVE carefully examined the Evidence contained in the Reports referred to them for Conſideration; and, in the fulleſt Conviction which that Evidence has impreſſed upon their Minds, that, without any conſiderable Enlargement of the pecuniary Aid already afforded by the Public, the Removal of thoſe Obſtacles to Induſtry, which at preſent impede the Exertions of Individuals, will effectually improve the Fiſheries of *Britain*, and, by that Improvement, increaſe the Strength of her Marine, advance her Manufactures, enlarge her Commerce, and extend her Population,

Your Committee have formed the following Reſolutions, which they now ſubmit to the Judgment of the Houſe.

RESOLVED,

THAT it is the Opinion of this Committee, That the Bounty which was granted by an Act, made in the 19th Year of His preſent Majeſty, and which will expire at the End of the next Seſſions of Parliament, ſhould not be renewed; but that, in the Place thereof, there ſhould be given, on every decked Veſſel of not leſs than Fifteen Tons Burthen, employed in the Herring Fiſhery, and fitted out and navigated according to Law, a Bounty of Twenty Shillings *per* Ton; and that on ſuch Herrings as ſhall be landed from any ſuch Veſſel, during any One Year, there ſhould be paid a Bounty after the Rate of Four Shillings for every Barrel of Herrings twice packed and completely cured: Provided always, That, if the Number of Barrels of Herrings imported in ſuch Veſſel, ſhall in any One Year exceed the proportion of Two Barrels and a Half of Herrings, ſo packed and cured, for every Ton of the Veſſel's Burthen (which, upon an Average of the laſt Twenty Years, is ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed to have been the Quantity of Herrings Annually caught) there ſhall be paid on every Barrel ſo exceeding the ſaid Proportion, a Bounty of no more than One Shilling: Which Inland Bounties of Four Shillings, and One Shilling, as the Caſe may be, ſhould be excluſive of the Bounty granted on all Herrings exported; ſo that, if the Induſtry and Succeſs of the Owner ſhould not be leſs than it has been upon an Average of the laſt Twenty Years, the Bounty he will receive will not be leſs than at preſent, and, ſhould his Induſtry and Succeſs be greater than before, he will recieve an additional Reward.

RESOLVED,

THAT it is the Opinion of this Committee, That, for the more effectual Prevention of Frauds, the Quantity of Herrings in any Cargo, entitled to the Bounty, ſhould be computed at the Time of their being unſhipped, while they are in the State in which they are denominated Sea Sticks, or Herrings not re-packed; and that Four Barrels of Herrings in that State ſhould be conſidered as equivalent to Three Barrels of Herrings packed a Second Time.

RESOLVED,

THAT, for the Encouragement of the Deep Sea Fiſhery, on the North and North-Eaſt Coaſts of the Iſland, it may, in the Opinion of the Committee, be expedient, that Premiums, of which the Total Amount in any One Year ſhall not exceed the Sum of Two hundred Guineas, ſhould, for a time to be limited, be paid, at the End of each Seaſon, to the Four Veſſels that ſhall have taken, in the Courſe of that Seaſon, in the aforeſaid Fiſhery, the greateſt Quantity of Herrings.

RESOLVED,

THAT, in the Opinion of this Committee, it is highly expedient, as well for the Purpoſe of encouraging the Fiſheries by an Extenſion of the Market, as for that of providing a cheap and wholeſome Article of Food for the Support of the Poor, That all Duties at this Time payable by Law on ſuch Herrings, Cod, Ling, and Salmon, or other Fiſh, caught and cured by *Britiſh* Subjects, as are removed for Home Conſumption, ſhould ceaſe and determine.

RESOLVED,

THAT, as it appears by Evidence contained in a Report preſented to the Houſe on the 14th Day of *July* laſt, and referred to this Committee, that the Diſtinction between *Haberdine Cod*, and *Cod* not *Haberdine*, is uſeleſs, inaſmuch as little leſs than the Whole Quantity of Dried Cod, exported during the laſt Thirty Years, has been ſhipped as *Haberdine*; and as it alſo appears, by Evidence contained in the ſaid Report, that the Value of Cod, in ſome of the Foreign Markets, is much diminiſhed by that Degree of Dryneſs which is denominated *Haberdine*, and on which the higheſt Bounty is now payable by Law; it is the Opinion of this Committee, That the Diſtinction of *Haberdine*, and not *Haberdine*, in the Cure of Cod, ought to be aboliſhed; and that the Bounty of Three Shillings *per* Hundred Weight, at preſent payable on *Britiſh Haberdine* Cod exported, ſhould be paid on all *Britiſh* Cod exported, whether *Haberdine* or not.

RESOLVED,

RESOLVED,

THAT, in the Opinion of this Committee, it is highly requiſite, that on all Barrels and Caſks, in which any Fiſh whatever (Freſh Fiſh excepted) ſhall be packed, either for Exportation or Home Conſumption, the reſpective Names of the Curers ſhould be marked, in conſpicuous and permanent Characters: And, that the Staves of all Barrels, in which White Herrings ſhall be packed for Exportation, ſhould not be of a leſs Thickneſs at the Bulge than Half an Inch; and that all ſuch Barrels ſhould be full Bound.

RESOLVED,

THAT, as it appears to this Committee, that, by an Act paſſed in the 12th Year of her late Majeſty Queen *Anne*, entitled, "An Act for allowing a Drawback upon the Exportation of Salt, "to be made uſe of for the curing of Fiſh taken at the *North Seas*, "or at *Ireland*; and alſo by an Act, paſſed in the 25th Year of His preſent Majeſty, entitled, "An Act for the further Encourage-"ment of the *Britiſh* Fiſheries," the Uſe of Salt, Duty free, for the Cure of ſuch Cod, Ling, and Hake, as are taken in the *North Sea*, is expreſſly allowed, whether ſuch Fiſh ſhall be exported, or ſold for Home Conſumption (which Privilege is accompanied by an expreſs Declaration, that the Cod, Ling, and Hake, ſo cured, ſhall be entitled to a Bounty on Exportation): And as it alſo appears to this Committee, that, by an Act paſſed in the 5th Year of his late Majeſty King *George* the Firſt, entitled "An Act for recovering "the Credit of the *Britiſh* Fiſhery in Foreign Parts, and better "ſecuring the Duties on Salt;" and alſo, by an Act paſſed in the 29th Year of his late Majeſty King *George* the Second, entitled, "An Act for encouraging the Fiſheries in that Part of *Great* "*Britain* called *Scotland*" (which laſt Acts, the Committee apprehend, relate to the Home Fiſheries alone), the Uſe of Salt, Duty free, is allowed for the Cure of ſuch Cod, Ling, or Hake, only as ſhall be cured for Exportation; a Reſtriction that is accompanied, however, by the Privilege of a Bounty on the Fiſh ſo exported: And, as it further appears to this Committee, that Doubts have ariſen, how far the Seas between the North-Eaſt Parts of *Great Britain*, and the oppoſite Coaſts of the Continent of *Europe*, are to be conſidered as included within the Limits of the *North Sea* (in conſequence of which Doubts, Veſſels ſailing for the ſame Sea, and employed on the ſame Banks, in taking the ſame Fiſh, are often fitted out under different Regulations, by which they are ſubjected to different Reſtrictions, and entitled to different Privileges)—this Committee are of Opinion, That, for the Purpoſe of giving Uniformity to the Law, and Relief from Doubt to the Subject, it is highly expedient, that the Boundary of the *North Sea* ſhould be clearly aſcertained, and expreſſly declared by the Legiſlature.

RESOLVED,

THAT the Committee are of Opinion, That, for the Encouragement of the Fiſheries, the Right of exerciſing any Trade or Calling, in any City, Town, or Borough in the Kingdom, ſhould be extended to all ſuch Perſons as ſhall follow, for the Space of Seven ſucceſſive Years, the Occupation of a Seaman or Fiſherman, on board

board of any Veſſel or Veſſels employed in any of the Fiſheries of *Great Britain*.

RESOLVED,

THAT, as it appears by Evidence contained in the Report referred to this Committee, that the ſeveral Laws which prohibit the Importation of freſh Fiſh, taken by Foreigners, have proved ineffectual—it is, in the Opinion of this Committee, highly expedient, that ſuch further Regulations ſhould be adopted, as may prevent the Continuance of an abuſe ſo injurious to the Fiſheries, and ſo obviouſly detrimental to the Naval Intereſts of the Kingdom.

RESOLVED,

THAT, in the Opinion of this Committee, it is highly expedient that Red Herrings, and all other Fiſh, on which, if cured in *England* and exported from *England*, or if cured in *Scotland* and exported from *Scotland*, a Bounty is payable by Law, ſhould alſo be entitled to that Bounty if cured in *England* and exported from *Scotland*, or if cured in *Scotland* and exported from *England*.

RESOLVED,

THAT, in the Opinion of this Committee, it is of the utmoſt Importance, that ſuch Fiſh-Curers as ſhall receive into their own Cuſtody, for the Purpoſe of preſerving Fiſh, Salt of *Britiſh* Manufacture, ſhould not be required to give any other Security, reſpecting the ſaid Salt, than their own Bonds juſtly and truly to account for the ſame; and that Credit for ſuch Quantities of the ſaid Salt, as ſhall have been uſed and duly accounted for, ſhould Annually be given, by the proper Officer, on the back of the ſaid Bond; and that ſuch Bond ſhould continue in force till a proper Account ſhall have been rendered of the Whole of that Salt ſpecified therein, or till the Duty ſhall be paid on the Deficiency.

RESOLVED,

THAT, in the Opinion of this Committee, all Bonds or other Securities demandable from the Takers or Curers of Fiſh, or from the Maſters or Owners of Boats employed in the Fiſheries, or in the Exportation of Fiſh, or in the Conveyance of the ſame from one *Britiſh* Port to another, ſhould be written on unſtamped paper.

RESOLVED,

THAT, as the Report referred to this Committee contains the ſtrongeſt Evidence of the pernicious Effects which the Fees or other Perquiſites of the Cuſtom-Houſe Officers, eſpecially in *Scotland*, have produced on the Fiſheries of the Kingdom; and as the Requiſition of ſuch Fees, however ſanctioned by long Uſage, appears, by the Orders of Parliament, in the 12th Year of the Reign of his late Majeſty King *Charles* the Second, to be contrary to the declared Intention of the Legiſlature; this Committee are of Opinion, That no Officer ſhould be permitted to aſk or accept of any Fee, or other Perquiſite, for or on account of any Tranſaction relative to any Veſſel or Boat employed in the Fiſheries, or in the Tranſportation from one Place to another of Fiſh, or of Salt for the Uſe of the Fiſheries, or for or on account of the Payment of any Bounty or Debenture on Fiſh, on Pain of forfeiting, for every ſuch Offence, Treble the Value of the Sum received, together with Coſts of Suit, and of being *ipſo facto* diſcharged, and rendered incapable of ſerving

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ing His Majeſty in any Civil Office in future: The Committee, at the ſame Time, indulging an earneſt Hope, that the Benevolence of the Legiſlature will induce them to make Compenſation to the Officers for the Abolition of their Fees; eſpecially as at preſent their Salaries are ſuch, that the Fees they are accuſtomed to take, heavy and oppreſſive as they are to the Fiſhermen, are, in many Inſtances, abſolutely requiſite for the creditable Subſiſtence of the Officer.

RESOLVED,

THAT, as the Value of the Privilege of curing Fiſh with Salt of *Britiſh* Manufacture, duty-free, is much diminiſhed in *Scotland*, by the Proviſion of the Act of the 29th of *George* the Second, that ſuch Salt ſhall be taken from the Salt Works of that Part of the Iſland—it is the Opinion of this Committee, That the Fiſh-Curers in every part of *Great Britain*, ſo far as they are allowed by Law to employ in the Cure of Fiſh Home-manufactured Salt, duty-free, ſhould be permitted to take the ſaid Salt from any of the Salt Works within the ſaid Kingdom.

RESOLVED,

THAT, as the opening a Communication between *Lock Gilp* and *Lock Crinan*, by a navigable Canal acroſs the Peninſula of *Cantire*, in *Argyleſhire*, would prevent the Neceſſity of a Voyage of more than One Hundred Miles, in a very dangerous Sea, and greatly promote the Fiſheries and Commerce of the North-Weſtern Coaſts of the Iſland; and, as it appears, by actual Survey, that the ſaid Communication may be effected at a moderate Expence, it is, in the Opinion of this Committee, extremely deſirable, that ſuch Perſons as are willing to perform, at their own Coſt, a Work ſo uſeful to the Public, ſhould receive all reaſonable Encouragement.

RESOLVED,

THAT, as the Buſineſs of the Fiſheries can only be carried on to Advantage by the joint Labour of many Individuals, aided by the Skill of ſeveral diſtinct Claſſes of Manufacturers; and as the Eſtabliſhment of Villages or Towns, in certain Situations, on the Northern and Weſtern Coaſts of *Scotland*, would not only furniſh the Means of that Co-operation and mutual Aſſiſtance, but would likewiſe afford a Market for ſome Part of the Produce of the Fiſheries, and much facilitate the Conveyance of the Remainder, whether ſold for Conſumption in the Inland Country, or for Exportation to Foreign Parts; it is the Opinion of this Committee, That the liberal Diſpoſition, which appears in many public-ſpirited Proprietors of Land upon theſe Coaſts, as well as in many reſpectable Individuals in the Southern Parts of the Kingdom, for the Eſtabliſhment of ſuch Villages and Towns, deſerves the higheſt Encouragement.

RESOLVED,

THAT, in order to encourage the forming, by Subſcription, a Fund for the Eſtabliſhment of ſuch Villages and Towns, it is, in the Opinion of this Committee, highly expedient, that the Subſcribers ſhould, by Act of Parliament, be declared to be a Joint Stock Company;

Company; that Power to appoint Agents for the Management of their Buſineſs ſhould be given them: and, that the Members ſhould be expreſſly exempted from a greater Extent of Reſponſibility, than that of the original Sum which each ſhall reſpectively ſubſcribe—That the Fund ſhould be declared to be applicable to no other Uſe, but that of renting or purchaſing Lands, and that of erecting, by Contract, Houſes and other neceſſary Buildings—That the Company ſhould be impowered to let or transfer, in Perpetuity, ſuch Parcels of their Land, as Individuals, with a View of Building at their own Expence, may be inclined to hire or to purchaſe—That the Company ſhould be reſtrained from engaging, as a Corporation, in any Trade, as well as from iſſuing Notes payable to the Bearer, or other Species of circulating Security—And that, in order to prevent exceſſive and pernicious Fluctuations in the Value of their Stock, the Act ſhould declare, that, during the ſpace of the Firſt Five Years of the Company's Eſtabliſhment, no Member ſhall diſpoſe of his Stock in any other Way than that of Gift or Bequeſt.

RESOLVED,

THAT, for the Encouragement of ſuch Fiſhermen, Manufacturers, and others, as ſhall become Houſeholders in the ſaid Villages and Towns, it may, in the Opinion of the Committee, be adviſeable to declare, that the Houſeholders in each of the ſaid Villages or Towns, as ſoon as their Number in ſuch Town or Village ſhall amount to or exceed Fifty, ſhall have a Right Annually to chooſe, from among their own Body, certain Magiſtrates, who ſhall have the ſame Powers, for the Government of ſuch Town or Village, as the Magiſtrates of Royal Burghs, in *North Britain*, are now, by Law, entitled to exerciſe: Provided, however, that no ſeparate or excluſive Corporation ſhall be erected within ſuch Town or Village, nor Money be exacted to entitle any Perſon to his Freedom, or to the Privilege of exerciſing any Profeſſion, or of carrying on any Trade, Buſineſs, or Employment in the ſaid Village or Town; and provided alſo, that no private Rights or Juriſdictions, already ſubſiſting, ſhall be infringed.

RESOLVED,

THAT, for the further Encouragement of the ſaid Villages and Towns, as well as for the more effectual Extenſion of Commerce, it may, in the Judgment of the Committee, be expedient, that in every Village or Town, of the Deſcription aforeſaid, in which the Houſeholders, from their Number, ſhall be entitled to elect Magiſtrates, a Poſt Office and Cuſtom-Houſe ſhould, with all convenient Diſpatch, be eſtabliſhed.

RESOLVED,

THAT, as Licences impoſing a heavy Tax on the Exerciſe of certain neceſſary Trades, are peculiarly unfavourable to the Eſtabliſhment of Towns, in the remote and unimproved Diſtricts of the Kingdom; and as the Law which declares that the different Branches of the Tannery ſhall not be carried on by One and the ſame Perſon, muſt be injurious to Infant Settlements, in which the Diviſion of Labour, that takes place in more extended Societies, is neither practiſed nor known; it may, in the Opinion

of the Committee, be expedient, that in all ſuch Villages or Towns as ſhall be erected in any part of the Coaſt, from the *Mull of Cantire* to the *Murray Firth*, the ſame Perſon ſhould be allowed to carry on, at the ſame Time, the ſeveral Branches of the Tannery Buſineſs; and that the Inhabitants ſhould, for the Space of Seven Years, have Permiſſion to exerciſe the Trades of a Common Brewer, Maltſter, Candlemaker, Tanner, Tawer, Dreſſer of Hides in Oil, or Currier, on Condition that every Perſon, who ſhall ſo carry on any of the ſaid Trades, ſhall Annually pay, by way of Licence, the Sum of One Shilling: Provided always, That no Perſon ſhould be entitled to that Indulgence who ſhall make, in any One Year, more than 1,000 Barrels of Beer, or more than 200 Quarters of Malt.

RESOLVED,

THAT as, by the Duty on Coal carried Coaſtways, the Inhabitants of many of the Diſtricts of *Scotland* are deprived of the Benefit, which the Abundance of this Article in the neighbouring Diſtricts would otherwiſe afford, it would, in the Opinion of this Committee, be highly expedient, that the Inhabitants of thoſe Diſtricts, in *Scotland*, in which the ſaid Duty is paid, ſhould, for a Term of Years, be permitted Annually to raiſe, by Aſſeſſment, or other Mode of Commutation, a Sum equal to that, which, on an Average of the laſt Five Years, thoſe Diſtricts have Annually contributed to the ſaid Duty; and ſhould, on that Condition, be liberated from this burthenſome Impoſt.

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